

The background of the cover is a detailed black and white illustration. It depicts a coastal town with several multi-story buildings featuring chimneys. In the foreground, two boats are beached on a sandy shore. One is a smaller boat with a white hull and dark trim, and the other is a larger, darker boat. Numerous seagulls are shown in flight across the sky and on the ground. The title 'CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL' is superimposed over the top half of the illustration.

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# *Sailors Hate the Sea*

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JOHN PREBBLE

WHEN James Middleton retired nobody who knew him was in doubt about his plans for the rest of his life. His own mind had been prepared for this day twenty years before, when he left the sea. He was then forty-five, and while he felt young still, and was unprepared for idleness, he was near enough to old age to determine his method of spending it. He had spent thirty-one years at sea, and when they were over it was not unnatural that he should think of his life as having passed its zenith. The sea had given him all he had seen of life and he felt close to it. Almost before he removed his uniform for the last time he said to his wife: 'Just a few years, and then when I retire it'll be to the sea somewhere.'

'A nice house,' he said on many occasions during the years that followed, 'not too large, just enough for Mother and me, but it must be by the sea. Got to be near the sea when I pack up, you know. Old sailors can't do without the sea.' He spoke of himself like that, in a whimsical, self-deprecating manner, as if he were aware that his pride in having been a sailor must seem a little ridiculous to landmen.

His wife died long before his retirement, but while she lived she encouraged his ambition. At times she still thought of him as the slim, good-looking seaman who had first spoken to her outside the Horticultural Hall in 1909. To her he retained some of the romantic charm of that young sailor, fresh from the Indies station or the grey Atlantic. So she nodded her head with approval when he told their friends that one day he would retire to the sea. It was she who made certain that this proposal would be a practical possibility, by ensuring that regular weekly payments were made to a building-society against the eventual purchase of a house by the sea.

For the following twenty years James Middleton worked as a commissionaire to a large insurance company, where he was known as 'the Sergeant.' This was not because his naval rank was unknown, but because the position had previously been held by an army pensioner who had been known thus. Nobody considered it worth while breaking the habit.

By the end, there was little of the slender, handsome sailor about James Middleton. He

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became good-naturedly fat, and his hair thinned into a grey mist above his open face. There was still a tightness in the flesh of his cheeks, as if it were bracing itself against a north-easterly wind. Tiny crow's-feet puckered the corners of his eyes, which were a pale blue and filled with a credulous amiability.

When he left for work in the mornings it was his custom to examine the sky speculatively. On such occasions he looked as if he knew all the tricks which the wind and rain could play on the earth, and there was something in his expression that made one feel that an inquiry about the day's weather would obtain from him an experienced and reliable answer.

He had received part of his naval training in sail, and in the little pubs along the Hammersmith riverside his opinion on rigging and roping was now and again asked for with respect. From those who asked his opinion he would accept a small tot of rum which he called, with whimsical jocularly, 'Nelson's blood.'

When his wife died, from which loss he took a long time to recover, his daughter Sarah, an only child, looked after him. The years changed her from a personable young woman to a condemned spinster, dry of tongue, yet withal kindly. In the early days she had little patience with her father's simple plans, his interminable memories of life at sea. She was certain that one day marriage would take her away from him, and from her responsibilities to him.

That day, however, never came, and being a philosophical woman she eventually accepted defeat and began to encourage her father as her mother had done. It gave her life, as much as his, some volition, and she too would nod approvingly when James Middleton said: 'You can't keep a sailor away from the sea. I want the smell of the sea about me when I die.' He said this sort of thing with a confident stare of his blue eyes. Sometimes he said it a little truculently, as if he expected opposition. At other times he was jovial, in the manner of people who speak of winning the Irish Sweep one day. But the men and women to whom he said it would look at him a little closer and discover that behind the round, insignificant-looking man there was still something of the old sailor—the tightness of the cheeks, the weather-etched lines, the blue eyes, the fading anchors tattooed neatly on his wrists.

JAMES MIDDLETON and Sarah lived in a small, three-roomed flat in one of those narrow houses that stand on parade between Hammersmith Broadway and Putney Bridge. They never regarded it as a permanent tenancy. It was something that would 'make do.'

So much a part of his character had his unimpassioned longing for a house at the sea become that it was almost a shock for James Middleton to realise, one day in his sixty-fifth year, that he would shortly be called upon to honour his ambition.

Suddenly his uneventful life reached a moment of minor drama. He was called into the General Manager's office and there he stood before Mr Chambers in that relaxed, unimpressive position of attention which sailors adopt. He looked at the General Manager with his respectful blue eyes. Mr Chambers, whose association with sailors had been confined to the boatmen he tipped at Bognor or Trouville, found the stare disconcerting. He did not realise that James Middleton was granting him the respect due from the lower-deck to the quarter-deck.

He brushed his hands across the papers on his desk and then turned his head to dip it over his afternoon cup of tea. He wiped his lips delicately with his handkerchief and said: 'Well, Sergeant, I suppose you know that by the terms of your engagement with this company you will be retiring this summer?'

James Middleton nodded, and said nothing, while his slow mind turned over the information and gently let it rest.

'Let me see,' said Mr Chambers, brushing his lips again, and then passing the handkerchief over the top of his bald head. 'That will be in about three months, won't it? Just thought we'd let you know that you are free to make whatever arrangements you think necessary.' He looked up and smiled behind his glasses. 'Retiring to the sea, aren't you, Middleton?'

'Yes, sir.' Something brightened inside the old man. 'Got to be near the sea, you know, sir. An old sailor has to be near the sea.'

He meant this kindly enough, but Mr Chambers was irritated. When he joined the firm twenty years before as a junior clerk Mr Chambers had first been told this by James Middleton. Then, as now, he regarded it as unspoken criticism and contempt for anyone who chose a life of office ledgers and accounts

## SAILORS HATE THE SEA

rather than the open freedom of the sea. 'Of course,' he said sharply, 'I quite understand.' But he did not, of course. He thought: Does the ridiculous old man think the sea belongs to sailors only?

When James Middleton went home and told his daughter Sarah, she showed the practicality she had inherited from her mother by spending very little time on congratulating her father. She said: 'Well, I suppose we'd better see about getting that house.'

THE following two months were full of an activity rare in James Middleton's life. Driven on by his daughter's busy common-sense, he found himself conducted on a rapid and exhausting tour of the Kent and Sussex coast-line. He took very little part in the negotiations with estate-agents, but was content to enjoy the novelty of it all. He nodded his head sympathetically when Sarah complained about the prices of the houses, about the dilapidations, but he was not really upset, and he was only once alarmed when his daughter declared that unless something suitable and reasonable was discovered they might have to abandon the whole proposal and look for a house in Streatham.

But they went on trying. More and more to his friends and to his neighbours James Middleton spoke of his retirement. He leant on his gate and chatted to the postman, blowing little balls of pipe-smoke out of the corner of his mouth. Before the typists in the office he allowed himself the vanity of romancing about his life at sea. Many people who had accepted his ambition without ever believing in it now said: 'So old Middleton's really retiring to the sea. Can't keep an old salt away from blue water, can you?' And along the riverside those last few weeks James Middleton savoured Nelson's blood with greater frequency. Life had a promise of romantic fulfilment.

The house was found at last, and James Middleton was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with it. He accepted its merits and defects on his daughter's authority. He did not consider it strange that in all those twenty years of sedentary life he had never once tried to visualise the house itself. He thought only of the sea. Not the wide, empty sea moving beneath the sky, but a sea thick with the ships he had once sailed in, from the revenue-cutter that had been his first ship to the grey

cruiser that had been his last. A sea, too, that was a backcloth for the faces of the men he had known, 'old ships' he called them. Although he never realised this, retiring to the sea was for him a matter of going back to those ships, to those men.

These pictures were most vivid in his mind during the last interview with the lawyer, when he put his broad, childish signature to papers of whose contents he had but the thinnest of understanding.

'Retiring to the sea, eh, Mr Middleton?' The lawyer's voice, a diplomatic mixture of deference and authority. 'You must have had an adventurous life. I have always envied sailors, so full an existence.'

James Middleton walked out of that office with a youthful step. 'It'll be nice,' he had said inevitably to the lawyer, 'to walk down to the sea after breakfast. An old sailor has to get back to the sea.'

The house itself was a modest, five-roomed bungalow lying on the plain between the downs and the sea. A half-moon of bent trees screened it from the south-west, and the garden was thick with a jungle of perennials. Daisies sugar-coated the lawn. There was even a bush of roses embracing the front-door.

The sea could not be seen from the plain, which was dotted with similar bungalows and traced by lonely metalled roads. Before the War a great housing-estate had been planned for this district, and it still had the unhappy air of having been abruptly deserted by the builders. A high dyke ran for miles along the beach, carrying on it the main road, and while you could smell the strong, pungent sea, you could not see it. It lay beyond the dyke, invisible.

When the day of his retirement came, James Middleton's mind was a confusion of pleasure and an odd sadness which he could not understand. He sat at breakfast in his shirt-sleeves, looking at the faded wallpaper and gently tapping his spoon on his cup. Sarah moved briskly about the room, talking with unusual garrulity. She was an astute woman and she had noticed that this morning her father was not the confident, self-assured man he generally looked. His shoulders had sagged a little inside his shirt, and his pale-washed eyes were staring uncertainly at the wall. 'Look,' she said, 'I got this out of the trunk. We'll put it on the wall down there. It'll look nice, won't it, Father?'

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It was a photograph he had forgotten, and he looked at it, unable to believe that this had once been he. There was an upright, slim, rakish-looking young man in the naval uniform of the turn of the century—white jacket with the insignia of a gunner on the sleeve, white ducks, and a large white straw-hat encircled by a black ribbon. It had been taken over forty years before and he was mildly surprised to recall from it that in those days he had worn a beard. Sarah looked at it, and then at her father's face, and saw the sudden happiness quickened there. 'You know,' she said, 'I don't think you've changed much.'

'Sailors don't change,' he said, 'Old blue-jackets are always young.'

She went to the door with him when he left for work, and she kissed him on the cheek with unexpected warmth. 'Shouldn't wonder if they have a surprise for you at the office to-day.'

JAMES MIDDLETON had had no real idea of what his daughter had meant until that afternoon when he was called into Mr Chambers's large office and found most of the staff there, talking in little groups. He pulled at the edge of his blue serge jacket and stood uncertainly in the doorway until he was seen. Then he heard the General Manager calling his name and found himself gently urged forward to the end of the room, where Mr Chambers stood behind a desk on which rested a large brown-paper parcel.

As he stood there, easing his neck in his collar, James Middleton listened to a burst of clapping, quickly subdued when Mr Chambers cleared his throat and rested one hand affectionately on James Middleton's shoulder. The other hand Mr Chambers thrust Napoleonically into his jacket. 'We all know,' he said, 'that the Sergeant is retiring to-day. Of course, he never was a sergeant, but Jim Middleton has been very patient with our ignorance.'

There was a titter of approval, and James Middleton was surprised. Nobody in the firm had ever called him 'Jim' before, and he looked down at his boots. He saw the dust on their toe-caps and he wished that he had been given enough warning to have rubbed them over with the little pad of cotton-wool which he always carried in his hip-pocket. He heard very little of what the General

Manager was saying. A sentence now and then came to him, an outbreak of dignified applause or polite laughter.

'Jim Middleton,' continued Mr Chambers, stressing the Christian name generously, 'knows what he wants. He wants to retire by the sea, and that's just what he's going to do—eh, Jim?' The old man felt Mr Chambers's arm squeeze his shoulder. 'So we all wanted to give him something that would remind him of us all and the happy times we have here.' There was a ribald and hastily-suppressed laugh from the back of the group. After Mr Chambers's sharp, unsympathetic eye had noticed and recorded the point of origin of this interruption he went on: 'Therefore it is with great pleasure that I hand him this little token of our esteem'—he pushed the parcel a few inches toward James Middleton—and this expression of the management's gratitude.' He pulled his Napoleonic hand from his jacket and brought with it an envelope which he gave to James Middleton.

There was hand-clapping then, subdued cheers, and a shout of 'Open it, Jim, boy!' which everybody knew came from the office-boy, and which everybody ignored, except Mr Chambers, who recorded in his neat mind a determination to speak to the offender once this business was over.

James Middleton was embarrassed. There was a heavy weight in his chest and a peculiar tightening in his throat. He placed his hand gently on the parcel.

'Open it, Jim, old chap,' said Mr Chambers, and the old man began to struggle with the knots. He looked up with a shy charm and smiled at his audience. 'Not a sailor's knots,' he said.

The General Manager laughed. 'Tied 'em myself,' he said. 'Just a landlubber's efforts.' He took out his ivory-handled penknife and cut the string. The paper opened beneath James Middleton's fingers. There was a table-lamp designed like a galleon—a shining, rakish ornament of chromium and yellow plastic, an electric-light bulb hiding behind its parchment sails. 'Thought you'd prefer something nautical,' said Mr Chambers, shaking James Middleton's hand, but facing the audience with a bland and paternal smile. There were cries of 'Speech!'

James Middleton rubbed the back of his hand along his chin. 'Thank you,' he said shyly, and then paused. 'I didn't expect

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this. . . I'll think of you all. It's nice to be remembered like this, and I hope when you all retire you'll be as lucky as I am. It's not every sailor that gets a chance to retire by the sea.' There were more cheers, and James Middleton was a little ashamed to find that his eyes were hot and wet.

It was not until he was in the train, on his way home with the table-lamp on his knee, that he remembered the envelope. He took it out and opened it. Inside was a cheque for five pounds and an unsigned note expressing appreciation for his long service.

THE following Wednesday came the move to the seacoast. Sarah Middleton went by train, early in the morning, but James went down with the removal men, sitting in the back of the great van, watching the countryside rolling slowly away behind him. The old man told the men sitting beside him that he knew they were getting near to the sea. He could tell it by the clouds in the sky, the way in which an unchallenged wind, coming in from the ocean, drew them out and teased their tails. The removal men smoked and nodded sympathetically when James Middleton said happily for the third time that day: 'I had to retire by the sea. Got to see it again, an old bluejacket has. Bit of a pension and a house by the sea, nothing like it, eh?'

When they arrived, he had no time to think of these things. Until midnight Sarah and he were busy moving furniture, and then she sent him to bed, bringing him a cup of cocoa and leaving him alone. He stood by the window, looking beyond the corner of the trees toward the black wall of the dyke, the lights of a car moving there, and above it the pale sky, which, he knew, stretched southwards over the sea. Slowly he eased his shoulders and smiled gently to himself. He felt like a child on the night before Christmas.

By agreement, breakfast was late the following morning, and as they ate it together Sarah was once more unusually talkative. 'Now just as soon as you've finished breakfast you go down and take a walk along the beach. I've looked up in the paper, and the tide should be in. If you can walk that far I should go along the beach into town. There's bound to be a lot of boats in the harbour.'

'Ships,' he corrected her kindly.

'Ships, of course.'

After breakfast she had a surprise for him. She brought him a double-breasted jacket of navy-blue flannel, with buttons of plain brass. With it was a cap with a shiny peak, a chauffeur's cap, which she thought looked nautical. He was embarrassed by the clothes, but he put them on, and when he had fastened the buttons Sarah stood back and held her hands together. 'My,' she said, 'I do think you look years younger!'

He looked down at the buttons and fingered one of them. 'I never wore fore-and-aft rig in the service, you know,' he said, and then added quickly, in case she should think he was disappointed, 'but it's very nice, Sarah girl, very nice indeed. Just the ticket.'

She went to the door with him and watched him as he set out along the dusty road toward the dyke. He walked with his back straight, the blue jacket tightly buttoned and showing creases beneath the arms, and his feet taking that sideways rather than forward step which is characteristic of sailors. The sun was to the southeast, flinging long shadows across the sandy dunes that lay close to the dyke. In the sky above was that faint iridescence that sometimes betrays a hidden sea. Sarah looked at her father and said to herself: 'It'll do him such a lot of good to see the sea again.' And then she turned and went back to her kitchen.

SARAH had scarcely finished washing the dishes before she heard a step on the garden-path, and she looked through the window and saw her father standing there, his hands thrust down into the pockets of his jacket and his head turned back toward the dyke. There was a curious expression of bewilderment in his eyes. She went out to him, wiping her hands on her apron, and as he saw the question in her face he said: 'I came back. To-morrow will do. I'm tired perhaps. . .'

'But didn't you get as far as the sea?'

'No, Sarah girl,' he said. 'There's plenty of time yet.'

For the rest of the day he sat on a deck-chair in the garden, his big hands resting on his knees, looking toward the dyke-wall and the hidden sea. The expression on his face was so forbidding that she did not question him further.

But the following morning, while he sat at breakfast, she brought the blue jacket and



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cap and dusted them ostentatiously in front of him before she laid them on a chair. After he had eaten, he put them on without a word and set out for the dyke. This time she did not come to the door, but watched him from the window.

She saw him rolling resolutely toward the dyke, little clouds of pale dust stirring from the heavy passage of his feet once he left the road and took the pathway across the dunes. When he reached the dyke he stopped. She held her breath, and her fingers gripped the curtain edge. She saw her father turn abruptly, as if someone had called him, and begin to trudge back to the house.

When he came into the kitchen he found her at the sink, and he stood in the doorway with the sun behind him. She did not look up, but busily whisked the soap into a lather above the dishes. 'You didn't get to the sea,' she said.

He sensed the impatient curiosity in her voice, the touch of anger, and he said slowly: 'No, not to-day, Sarah. To-morrow, perhaps. It's a nice day, isn't it?'

He sat in the deck-chair as he had done the day before, his hands on his knees, and the expression on his face was one of curiosity and incredulous astonishment.

THE following morning Sarah was determined that her father should reach the sea, and she brought him his jacket and cap, and said firmly: 'Now you walk along the sea-road into town, Father. The tide's in and the harbour should be full of boats.' She smiled. 'I mean *ships*, of course.'

She shepherded him out of the house as if he were a child going to school for the first time, and she watched him anxiously. He walked on resolutely enough, looking neither to the left nor to the right, but she knew that he was not happy. She waited until he reached the dyke. Instead of climbing up to the sea-road he stopped there and thrust his hands down into his jacket-pockets. She did not know what he was thinking or what was happening inside the spirit of the man.

Thirty yards from the sea, but hidden from it by the rampart of the dyke, James Middleton stood and listened to the soft rush of waves on the pebbled beach. He stared at the dyke and wondered why he could not climb it and face the ocean.

His mind was crowded with pictures, faces

of men he had known long ago and who now came back to him with the thought of the sea. He saw the silhouettes of ships he had loved, lying in all the harbours of the world, ships that had long ago disintegrated beneath the breakers' hammers or the enemy's torpedoes. He realised that these things were what the sea meant to him. Without them it meant nothing. If once he climbed the dyke and saw the empty stretch of ocean he would have to accept the fact that these memories, which he kept alive so vividly, were of dead things, and he, with them, was also dead.

Over the top of the dyke, like a wave itself, poured a group of half-naked children, shouting to each other, dressed in scant bathing-suits, the legs and arms brown, their hair and eyebrows salt-caked. The virile unanimity of their friendship touched the old man's loneliness. They eddied about him and laughed up at him kindly. Some of them carried buckets full of sea-water which slopped over and stained the dry sand at James Middleton's feet. He looked down at it. He had seen the sea. He turned slowly and began to walk back to the house. Sarah Middleton, seeing her father returning once more, hurried back into her kitchen, and when he entered she did not cross-question him.

From that day on the old man never once climbed the sea-wall to within view of the ocean. He listened to it murmuring in the distance, he smelt the tang of it coming inland with the winter winds. Sometimes through the fog he heard the sad baying of a ship's siren. He imagined the channel out there to be full of his old ships, the liberty-boats coming ashore with the men he knew long ago. Because he never went to see the sea, he did not believe that it was empty. He never saw the sea again. He was happy to have it that way. The dyke-wall helped him to keep alive his memories, and as he grew older those memories became greener.

Sarah never spoke to him of this peculiar and slightly ridiculous situation. In a dim way she understood her father's motives. They even pretended sometimes that he took a morning walk along the sea-road, and she smiled when he said to their new friends and neighbours: 'Had to retire by the sea, you know. An old sailor has got to see the sea again.'

Those last years were the happiest in James Middleton's life. In the evenings he sat in his chair and talked of his youth, as if it were all

something that had happened yesterday, and that on the other side of the dyke-wall waited his friends and the ships he knew.

In time he died, quite peacefully and quite happily. When his friends came to Sarah, she smiled at them and said: 'I'm glad the

old man was able to come back to the sea before he died.'

The funeral was a simple affair. Sarah Middleton made one stipulation. It was that the procession should take the long way into town, by the dyke-road, in full view of the sea.

September First Story: *Bush Boy, Poor Boy* by James Aldridge.

## Teazle Knowledge

LAURENCE WILD

TO a few Somerset villages, such as Hatch Beauchamp, Fivehead, Curry Mallet, and Curry Rivel, the month of August brings not only the corn harvest, but also that of the teazle crop. This cultivated variety of the wild teazle—sometimes spelt teasel—is one of the countryside's little-known crops. It is grown specially for cloth manufacturers, who, unusual as it may seem, use the head of the teazle plant as a cloth-working tool. The teazle is, in fact, an important factor in the making of certain fine-quality cloths designated as face cloths. Such cloths are made in west of England woollen mills, and among them may be listed high-class livery cloths, billiard-table cloths, and these cloths used for naval officers' uniforms.

One of the main characteristics of these top-grade materials, acknowledged as the best of their class in the world, is their perfect finish, which is partly obtained by a finishing process known as cloth raising, in which a nap, or pile, is teased up on the face of the cloth. At one time teazles were always used for cloth-raising, but nowadays the process is often carried out on a card-wire raising-machine equipped with pointed wire teeth mounted on strips of a rubber-cotton composition. But for really fine-quality face cloths the action of the modern card-wire machine is considered

too fast and too drastic, and nothing has yet been found to equal the slower and less rigorous action of the traditional west of England teazle raising-gig.

In this machine the cone-shaped teazle-heads, full of short, pliable, hooked spines, or awns, are mounted on rods in a revolving drum. As the cloth comes into contact with the teazle-heads the hooked spines pluck up the surface fibres and lay them in one direction until a smooth nap or pile is teased up along the entire length of a piece of cloth. As many as 2000 heads are required to tease up the face of a full piece of cloth about forty-five yards long. After the cloth surface has been raised the cloth is put through a cropping process, in which the nap is reduced by a machine similar in action to a lawn-mower, and able to cut down to the fineness of a cigarette-paper.

TEAZLE seed is sown broadcast in March, and in its first season it produces only a squat rosette of leaves, similar to the beginnings of a large thistle. The plant grows best in a heavy clay or clay loam; without such anchorage it may easily be blown over by the wind. In November the best specimens are selected and transplanted out in rows with the aid of a small hand-dibber. The leaves grow



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in pairs, and each pair forms a cup round the stem, which holds water to nourish the plant. It was once thought that the plant was insectivorous, because drowned insects are often seen floating in the leaf-cups.

Teazles transplanted in November start to flower in the following July. During the early part of August the heads lose their flowers and become ready for harvesting. By now the plants are as much as six or seven feet high, bearing anything from fifty to one hundred heads apiece. An acre of suitable land will yield anything from 150,000 to 200,000 heads of various sizes. The heads, which grow at the top of the tall main stems, one in the centre of each plant, are called 'kings.' They are, of course, the largest and finest.

The harvesting is done by reapers who work with a long pole and a short curved knife held in the palm of the hand. Some reapers can cut as many as 10,000 heads a day. Thick gloves protect their hands from the thorny leaves and stems. The heads are cut off together with several inches of stem to allow them to be bound together in 'handfuls' of fifty. They are tied with a bond made from the stem of a king. Then, to be more easily carried, the bunches, or handfuls, are fastened to the poles, until a full pole looks somewhat like a long revolving brush. The full poles are placed upright against special outdoor frames for the teazle-heads to dry in the sun. Whenever possible the growers prefer to dry teazle-heads out of doors, but as rain can quickly destroy the quality of the heads the drying often has to be completed in large airy sheds. When the whole of the crop has been harvested and properly dried it is sold at so much per 'pack' of 20,000 heads.

At one time the crop was graded by some growers into kings, queens, middles, and buttons. Other growers had only three grades—kings, bests, and smalls. To-day no grading is done by the growers; the heads are loosely packed into sacks. Yields are subject to great variations, but about seven to ten packs per acre may be regarded as a fair average. Prices are also variable. In pre-war days a pack of 20,000 teazles made from £5 to £8. During the war, prices rose as high as £20 per pack. To-day's price is about £12.

SUCH, then, is the teazle, sometimes known as the fuller's herb, or, in more ancient English, the tæsel. It has been used as a cloth-worker's tool ever since the very beginning of woollen manufacture. In fact, it is recorded that during the early part of the 14th century, when Edward II started to revive this country's failing woollen-cloth industry, several powerful foreign manufacturers were so alarmed that they tried to wreck the scheme by attempting to buy up all the teazles they could find anywhere in the kingdom. At that period, and for many centuries afterwards, the teazle was widely grown in England, particularly in Yorkshire near the cloth-manufacturing centres of Halifax and Huddersfield. It is also recorded that the crop was grown in East Anglia until that part of the country lost its once-famous woollen and worsted industry to Yorkshire's more go-ahead West Riding. In Gloucestershire the teazle plantations were thought to date back to the days of Edward III. And in Somerset, now the last stronghold of the teazle crop, the plant has been grown ever since the time of Richard I, almost eight centuries ago.

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## The Road to the Isles

*Far in the south land,  
Why should it taunt me?  
Like bells over water,  
Why should it haunt me,  
The Road to the Isles?  
For I'm of the fenlands,  
With no mountains near them,  
The mild, swelling ploughlands—  
I scorn them, I fear them,  
The hills and their wiles!*

*But deeper than viol  
And clearer than clarion,  
From the Black Wood of Rannoch,  
From the slopes of Schiehallion,  
Over the miles  
Of moorland and heather,  
With the sunset before me,  
It echoes, to lure me  
From the country that bore me—  
The Road to the Isles!*

HELEN GREY.



## Alpine Omens

CICELY WILLIAMS

**I**S there some supernatural power which operates at times in the Alpine world? Are mountaineers possessed of a kind of sixth sense, an awareness of the invisible, which comes to their aid among the mountains? Or is all this merely superstition and the result of an over-anxious state of mind?

The average Briton, with characteristic common-sense, cares little for these things. It is probably just as well—we might never climb at all if we paid heed to every cautionary tale that is told. And yet there is something strangely compelling about some of these experiences. I cite three instances met with already in my own short climbing career.

**A** YEAR or two ago a friend of mine, a quite hard-headed business man, set out from Zermatt to make the traverse of the Matterhorn. He was accompanied by his usual guide, Emil Perren, one of the best known of the Zermatt guides. They planned to go up by the ordinary route, via the Hörnli Ridge and down by the difficult Italian ridge, returning to Zermatt over the Théodule Pass.

The weather was not too promising when they left the Hörnli Hut, but conditions improved as they climbed. The sun rose in a cloudy sky and thick mists swirled round the

Matterhorn. Only the summit, from the shoulder upwards, was clear. Suddenly, as they approached the roof, Emil Perren stopped and touched his tourist's shoulder. 'See, the Brocken Spectre!' he exclaimed.

The Brocken Spectre is a phenomenon not confined to the Alps, although it is unusual to find it in lesser mountain-ranges. It was once observed, however, by no less a person than the late Frank Smythe in the Welsh hills during a winter climb. The spectre is caused by the relative position of the sun and banks of cloud. The climber sees his own shadow thrown on the clouds around him. It is said to be an eerie experience and most guides regard it as full of portent. Certainly Emil Perren did. 'The Brocken Spectre!' he repeated. 'We are in for trouble.'

'Oh, nonsense!' replied my friend, fearing that Emil might suggest abandoning the climb. 'It's an extraordinary sight, I admit, but there's no reason to think we're about to be killed.'

'Certainly not,' replied Emil, 'but it's a warning. We must be very, very careful.'

They reached the summit of the Matterhorn, rested for half-an-hour, and commenced the descent down the Italian ridge. My friend was so engaged with the intricacies of the rock-work, the manipulation of the fixed

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ropes, and the many other hazards of this ridge that he entirely forgot about the Brocken Spectre and Emil's gloomy forebodings.

They had completed more than half the descent, and most of the difficulties were over, when he found himself seized by the arm and pushed under an overhanging slab of rock. He gazed at the guide in blank amazement. 'Lie down,' commanded Emil. 'Don't move. Listen!'

From far above them came the distant rattle of some loose pebbles. Within a few seconds the rattle had increased to a roar and a vast cascade of stones and small boulders crashed on their sheltering slab of rock and bounced off into space. The bombardment continued for some minutes, and after it had passed they could still hear the distant thunder of the falling rocks as they continued on their way to the base of the mountain. 'You see,' remarked Emil quietly, 'I was right. We can now get on with the climb.'

'Well, I'm glad you heard the fall in time,' answered the Englishman, continuing the descent with rather less zest than before. 'That would have been the end of us.'

'One cannot ignore the Brocken Spectre,' was Emil's brief retort.

After hearing this story from my friend I chanced to come on Emil smoking his pipe outside the Monte Rosa hotel. 'You had a good trip yesterday?' I inquired.

'It was a fine climb,' he replied, 'but we had trouble. After daybreak we saw the Brocken Spectre. I knew that was a warning. All day I was watching and listening. I heard a stone avalanche start high up on the mountain. We sheltered under a rock and it passed over us. And we came safely back to Zermatt.'

I looked at Emil. He is a fine guide, and it was quite obvious that every word he had said was sincere.

**I**N 1936 Isidore Perren, one of the strongest guides in the Zermatt valley, was killed with his climber on the ordinary route on the Matterhorn. How the accident happened to such a first-class guide was a complete mystery. For many years his death was discussed in Zermatt by villagers and visitors alike. The name of Isidore Perren became a household word.

Two years after this accident my own guide, Bernard Biner, President of the Zermatt guides, arrived one evening at the Festi Hut

with one of his regular tourists, a famous Italian climber. The Italian prefers to remain anonymous, so we will call him Benedict. They were bent on climbing the Täschhorn by the Teufelsgrat, one of the most severe ascents in the Zermatt district. It was not an unduly exacting climb for the Italian as, with Bernard, he had already achieved most of the major routes in the Alps, including the famous east face of Monte Rosa.

At this stage in the story it would be as well to mention that Bernard Biner is the least superstitious mountain man I have met. He is a cosmopolitan figure, who held an important international post during the War, and there is nothing of the simple Alpine peasant in his attitude to life. Benedict, the Italian, is a convinced atheist, inclined to treat the customs and superstitions of the people of the Vispatal with a good deal of contempt.

The Festi Hut was, at that time, a primitive, dilapidated affair with no amenities, and after the climbers had eaten their supper they rolled up in their blankets for a few hours' sleep. Before midnight Benedict roused Bernard. 'There is someone tapping at the window,' he said.

'Rubbish,' replied the guide. 'Get some sleep while you can. We shall have to be up in a couple of hours.' He turned over and was soon asleep again.

They were due to get up at 2 a.m., but long before that Benedict called Bernard again. His face was white and his hands shook. 'I can't do the climb,' he announced. 'I've had a terrible experience.'

Bernard woke up finally. 'Whatever do you mean?' he asked. 'Tell me what has happened.'

'Twice I heard someone rattling the window,' said Benedict, speaking very quickly and in a low voice. 'When I looked I saw Isidore Perren outside. He was pointing up to the Täschhorn. I went out and spoke to him. He kept repeating: "Don't go on the Teufelsgrat to-morrow! Don't go on the Teufelsgrat to-morrow!" Then he disappeared.'

'And what did you do then?'

'I went to sleep, but I had a dream.'

'What did you dream?'

'I dreamed that Isidore was struggling with you. You were at the place on the mountain where the ordinary route and the route up the Teufelsgrat divide.' Benedict paused for breath and wiped the sweat from his face.

'Well,' said Bernard, 'go on.'

'He tried to take your lantern from you. He tried many times. Then the wind put out the candle. And all the while he was pointing towards the summit.'

'And did he take my lantern away?' asked Bernard.

'I don't know. I woke up.'

'You ate too much supper—that's what's the matter with you,' asserted Bernard coolly, adjusting his puttees in readiness for the climb.

'I can't go, I tell you,' moaned the Italian.

Bernard continued his preparations. 'Come on,' he urged. 'Get ready now. Be a man! Think how often you've laughed at the village people about their superstitions.'

Unwillingly Benedict began to pack his rucksack. 'All right,' he said morosely. 'I'll come, to please you. But I shan't enjoy it.'

Unnoticed by the Italian, Bernard folded up his candle-lantern, put it in his rucksack, and took out his electric-torch. With Benedict in such a state, he would not run the risk of any chance coincidence.

Soon after two o'clock they left the hut. It was still dark when they reached the position on the mountain where the routes divide. Bernard shortened the rope between himself and his climber and turned towards the Teufelsgrat. As he did so, his electric-torch flickered and went out. He shook it violently, but there was no response. Nonchalantly he turned to Benedict. 'I'll use your torch, I think,' he said, holding out his hand. Slowly the Italian handed over his torch. Bernard switched it on. It refused to light. Several times he tried, but nothing happened. He glanced at the terrified man trembling beside him. He was loath to pay attention to the supposed warning, but he had not only himself to consider. 'All right,' he said quietly, 'we'll leave the Teufelsgrat. Let's go up by the ordinary route on the face.' Benedict turned round with alacrity. Never had a climber looked more relieved.

They reached the sharp summit of the Täschhorn in good time and in excellent weather. The sun blazed down from a clear sky. Only on the Dufourspitze of Monte Rosa there hung a tiny black cloud, no larger, in fact a good deal smaller, than a man's hand.

After a rest they began the descent. When they were half-way down the face of the mountain black clouds suddenly raced across the sky; the sun was blotted out; a curious

green light glowed on the peaks; the wind rose with a roar to a mighty gale.

Somehow Bernard fought his way down the rest of the route and brought his climber in safety to the Festi Hut. That storm is remembered by mountaineers all over Europe. Never has a storm broken so rapidly. It raged from the Austrian Alps to Dauphiné, and it continued unabated for three days.

When Bernard told me this story I did not at first understand its true significance, having never climbed the Teufelsgrat. 'Of course, a ridge would be much more exposed in a storm,' I suggested, remembering some of my own experiences on lesser peaks.

Bernard laughed. 'I shouldn't be here to tell you the story if we'd been on the Teufelsgrat,' he said. 'It's a much longer climb. We should not long have left the summit when the storm broke. I could never have got down the Teufelsgrat in that weather. It would be impossible for any climber. Nor could a rescue party have got up to us. The storm went on for three days, remember.'

'You would have been lost?' I asked.

Bernard nodded. 'Without a doubt. It's a hundred per cent certain that we should have been killed.'

'And do you believe that Benedict's dream really was a warning?'

Bernard smiled thoughtfully. 'I just don't know,' he replied, 'but I often think about it.'

THE third story concerns the death, last summer, of the famous guide Otto Furrer. As in the first story, the incident is connected with the Italian ridge of the Matterhorn. All mountaineers and skiers, as well as many non-climbers, will have read of the tragic circumstances of Otto's death. Seldom has any guide met such an undeserved fate.

Otto was killed on Thursday, August 26th, by the breaking of the fixed rope called the Grande Corde, some distance below the summit of the Matterhorn on the Italian ridge. The catastrophe seems even more deplorable from the fact that only on the previous Monday Otto had remarked to Elias Julien, another Zermatt guide, that the Grande Corde needed renewing. That incident, however, remarkable though it is, is not the point of this particular story.

I arrived in Zermatt a few days after the accident and Bernard Biner gave me the following account.

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On the night of Wednesday, August 25th, there were, at the Matterhorn Hut, four parties whose objective was the Italian ridge. One party was composed of two guides from St Niklaus with a Swiss girl of seventeen; another consisted of an Englishman with a guide from Randa; the third was Bernard Biner and a young Englishman from Cambridge; and the fourth was Otto Furrer with Frau Erlanger, a well-known Swiss lady climber with whom he climbed regularly every season.

The weather was good, and all four parties met on the summit and rested there for half-an-hour. Bernard was struck by two things as they sat on the summit exchanging anecdotes. One was the particularly friendly and happy state of mind of Otto Furrer, whom he had known, of course, all his life. The other was the distracted demeanour of Frau Erlanger. In Bernard's hearing she said to Otto: 'Otto, I have climbed with you for twenty-one years and I have never been frightened before. But to-day I cannot bear to look down the Italian ridge. It terrifies me. I could not sleep all night for thinking about it.'

Otto took this remark with his usual cheerful and philosophic calm. 'Well, we can't go back now,' he said lightly, 'so we have to go down the Italian ridge.'

The guides from St Niklaus and their girl climber went first. Otto and Frau Erlanger followed. The guide from Randa and his tourist went next. Bernard Biner and his companion brought up the rear.

Not far below the summit the guide from Randa called to Bernard: 'Something has happened. I see the St Niklaus guides climbing up again.' Bernard joined him and went ahead down the ridge. He reached a point from which the Grande Corde can be

seen. More than two hundred feet below he saw Otto and Frau Erlanger lying on the rocks; the St Niklaus guides were bending over them; and—the Grande Corde had disappeared.

Bernard Biner and the guide from Randa upheld, at that terrible moment, all the best traditions of the great Alpine guides. Without fuss or excitement they replaced the missing fixed rope by knotting their own ropes. The Randa guide went down first; Bernard lowered the tourists to him, and finally came down himself. The whole operation took over an hour. When they reached the other party Otto Furrer was already dead; Frau Erlanger was unconscious.

It fell to Bernard Biner to assist the doctor to bring Frau Erlanger back from Breuil to Zermatt by car. This involved a long detour and the crossing of the Col de la Forclaz. It was not until nearly seventy hours after the accident that Frau Erlanger completely recovered consciousness and realised the full extent of what had happened. As the car was passing through Sion in the Rhone valley on the journey back to Zermatt she whispered to Bernard: 'Bernard, do you remember what I said to Otto on the summit of the Matterhorn?'

'Yes,' Bernard replied sadly, 'I remember.'

NO doubt other stories of this type could be told by many mountaineers. It seems impossible to decide just how much importance, if any, should be attached to them. So far, I am glad to say, I have never been the recipient of an apparent warning. But, if such a thing were to happen to me, I am inclined to think that I might pay considerable attention to it.

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## Incomplete Angler

*From the silver-spangled brook  
Johnny turns with doleful look,  
Climbing with reluctant feet  
Up the banks of meadowsweet.*

*Larks are singing in the height,  
But the minnows will not bite,  
Blithely flits the butterfly,  
But the sticklebacks are shy,*

*And the tadpoles, in a tribe,  
Pertly wriggling, seem to gibe.  
Slowly Johnny wends away,  
He will fish no more to-day.*

*Yellow pollen gilds his shoon  
As he trudges home, the loon,  
Through the buttercups, afar,  
With his empty jelly-jar.*

ELEANOR QUIN.



## A Bunch of Nasturtiums

V. C. WALTER

'OH no, not nasturtiums, dear. I'm sure we can think of something better than that,' I said.

'Well, their colours are so good, you know. Just the thing,' and he handed me a bunch of red, orange, and yellow nasturtiums.

I drew back, unwilling to take them, so acute is my dislike of nasturtiums' dreary vulgarity and harsh, spiced smell. Sadness settled heavily around me as a scene I had witnessed more than forty years ago rose to the surface of my memory.

It was the 1st of August 1900. I was travelling to the seaside with my nurse Mary for a month's holiday. The train that at first had sped along so lustily, like a great enchanted monster tossing proudly the plume of white feathers on his head, had now tired, and for hours, or so it seemed to me aged five, had been crawling along at walking-pace. There I knelt glumly on the prickly plush-covered seat, looking out at the flat, bare, treeless, Irish countryside, through which great grey boulders humped themselves up at such frequent intervals that even a goat had difficulty in finding sustenance in the small pockets of earth between. The occasional mud-built thatched cabins, devoid of either chimney or windows, and with blue turf-smoke curling

languidly from the door, slid so slowly across the scene that I had plenty of time to observe the ragged occupants leaning listlessly over the half-doors to watch the passing of the daily train.

People such as these were no novelty to me. They were all around, and part of the pattern of daily life, but I was to grow many years older before understanding the hopelessness of those who have no other prospect than hunger, cold, and sorrow; no more comfort than the animals, with whom, if they possessed any, they shared a common roof; no more knowledge of ablutions, since the day they were born, than the corner of a towel dipped in the kettle and licked over their faces before going to Mass on Sunday. Under such conditions many of the young went into what was described as 'a decline,' dying early, and those who were left, unable to scratch a living out of the stony earth, emigrated to America, from whence drifted back tales of fabulous wealth, of gold in the streets waiting to be picked up without any tilling of the un-rewarding soil.

The train bounced my forehead against the window-pane, jolted again, and rattled to a stop at a long dismal platform set in the middle of the bog. It was raining a thin



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dreary drizzle that settled like white cobwebs on the woolly surface of a black shawl drawn over the head of an old woman standing in a little group. The only building on the platform was a green wooden shelter, and near by was a long board upheld by two uprights planted in a small flower-bed edged with large sharp stones. Of flowers there were none—unless you counted the nasturtiums climbing up the wooden supports and straggling on to the platform.

'Where are we?' I asked Mary.

'Killasta Junction,' she answered. 'That's what it says on the notice.'

'Let ye get in now, the guard will be waving his flag in a minute,' said the kind-faced porter to the little group on the platform, of which the old woman was one. Instantly an eerie wailing rose to the lead-coloured sky. It was the old woman. She wailed rhythmically, clinging to a younger woman, who had a girl of about my own age by the hand and a baby in her arms. Beside them stood an old man, bent in an attitude of hopeless resignation and occasionally wiping the back of his hand across his eyes, while, standing with one hand on the door of a wooden-seated third-class carriage, was a young man waiting for his wife to follow him, and carrying in his other hand all their luggage wrapped in a large red handkerchief.

'Why are they crying?' I asked Mary, and to my surprise saw that she, too, was wiping her eyes with her hand.

'They're going away to America,' she told me, and from her subdued tone I judged it best not to ask any more questions.

So America must be indeed a sad place if people wailed like that at the thought of going there, and why did they have to go if they did not want to? Why not stay with the old man and woman?

The engine whistled shrilly, the train jerked into motion, and the wails of the old woman rose high, to mingle with the eerie notes of the curlew, so familiar in that desolate land. I was borne away to my seaside holiday and forgot the scene I had witnessed, or thought I had, until the giving of a bunch of nasturtiums many years later recalled its poignancy to my mind.

**I**N the course of time I grew up and married a naval officer, travelling to many parts of the world, but never to America, and of this I

was glad, having a subconscious feeling that America was a sad country.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, John, my husband, was Commander of one of His Majesty's cruisers. She was torpedoed in the South Atlantic in 1942, but managed to crawl into Cape Town, where for six months she lay under repair. During this time both officers and ship's company were adopted by the residents and overwhelmed with kindness and hospitality. My husband visited and stayed in many beautiful homes, and when he left South Africa he carried back to me five chests full of gifts for the children and myself from women we had never seen. Here were friends indeed.

From then on I had a considerable South African mail making many plans for meeting when the war should be won. But only one family, the Van Kroots, sent me photographs, so that they were the ones I got to know most intimately. They owned large vineyards and a wine-making business.

I had snaps of their home right from the entrance-gates, past the tall stone piers with their elegant lanterns, up the curving drive beneath luxuriant sun-chequered trees, to a small pond and iris-garden, and then on up a gentle slope to the gracious white wooden house, with its formal Georgian-style doorway approached by a shallow flight of steps wreathed with wistaria. I had snaps, too, of the children, riding or surfing, and of the whole family in their ocean-going yacht.

Aided by John's vivid descriptions of life in the Van Kroots' beautiful home, all the family were already my intimate friends when, after the war, a letter came from Mrs Van Kroot. In it she said that she was taking her daughter Mary, now aged nineteen, on a year's trip to Europe. On previous trips before the war she herself had never visited Ireland, but her husband had an idea that I was Irish. If this were so, and I would come with them as guide, they would like to include a visit to Ireland in their itinerary.

I myself had seldom visited the land of my birth in the last thirty years and quite welcomed a chance to go, so on the 15th of July 1950 I flew over to Dublin, collected a car and chauffeur there, and drove down to Shannon airport to meet my South African friends.

**I**T was a perfect Irish summer's morning as I stood waiting for the plane to come in.



## A BUNCH OF NASTURTIUMS

The sky was pale blue, lightly touched with puffs of white cloud. Haycocks on the level meadows floated out to the horizon on a silvery haze, and over all lay the unhurried stillness of Ireland.

There was no mistaking my friends as they stepped down from the aircraft. Both of them tall and elegant in expensive English-tailored suits, they made me suddenly and acutely aware of what five years of clothes rationing had done to my wardrobe. They each carried a mink coat and much expensive impedimenta in the way of cameras and field-glasses.

Over luncheon I spread out the map showing them the route I proposed from Limerick to Killarney, the scene of the tragedy of the Colleen Bawn. On to Cork, where

*'Tis the bells of Shandon  
That sound so grand on  
The pleasant waters  
Of the River Lee.*

From there to Blarney, where they must lie on their backs and be held by the ankles while they lean up to kiss the Blarney Stone and be blest ever after with the gift of tongues. Then on to Waterford, once famous for the beauty of its glassware, but now rather like a beach from which the tide has receded, leaving its miscellaneous jetsam in the form of derelict-looking warehouses, empty streets, and dejected, drooping horses under empty cabs. Dublin where you can admire the Book of Kells if so minded, or eat the best food in Europe and drink good wines, if that is the way your inclinations lie. Across the country to Athlone, once famous for its cathedral and priory, now just a sleepy market-town. Right on to the west coast and the remote parts of Mayo and Connemara, where even to-day many of the inhabitants 'haven't the English.' South through Galway, once the busiest port in Western Europe, where you can lean over the river-bridge in the centre of the city to look down on the salmon jostling so thickly, as they wait their chance to go upstream, that you could not drop a pebble between them. And south-west down the majestic coast of Clare, where the cliffs tower up to six hundred feet high, and so across the Shannon and back to the airport.

**I**T all turned out just as it had been arranged. The weather was superb, with the mercury

hovering just at about 80 degrees all the time. The hotels, with one exception, were first-class, and, in fact, Ireland showed her charming carefree leisured self in full perfection, while my two companions proved to be cultured, observant, and stimulating travellers.

Sadly we had arrived at the last day. We lay on the top of the Cliffs of Moher, the sea-pinks making a springy cushion beneath us. The sun beat hot on our backs and the seagulls argued hoarsely overhead as we gazed down at the thin smoke-like mist of spray that veiled the line of surf far, far below.

Then Mrs Van Kroot said: 'Where is the West Clare Railway that Percy French wrote about? Do you remember the song?'

*'Are you right there, Michael, are you right,  
Do you think that we'll get there before the  
night?  
Sure it all depends on whether the ould injin  
holds together,  
But it might then, Michael, so it might.'*

'Do you know it?'

'Oh yes, indeed I do. I've often travelled on it. Three hours it took to do the twenty-six miles from Ennis to Kilkee. The line runs quite close to here.'

'Well, wouldn't it be an experience just to get on to it and go from one station to another if there was a train at any sort of reasonable time? We could get the car to go on and pick us up again.'

'I don't know what time the train passes now,' I said. 'It used to leave Ennis about three in the afternoon, getting to Kilkee about six. That would mean it passed here about half-past four. Would you like to send the driver to find out?'

It was a very pleasant place in which to idle away a few hours of a still summer's day, where the voices of the seagulls and the curlews were the only sounds of life in all the countryside, and the Atlantic thundered dully below.

At last we drove to the station and boarded the leisurely train, telling the car to pick us up further down the line. We had turned inland now as we crawled along at a snail's pace, and I amused my companions by recounting that Mary, the nurse of my youth, used to tell me that the rule on this train was 'First-class passengers, keep your seats; second-class passengers, get out and walk; third-class passengers, get out and push.'

With a rattle and a jolt we drew up at a

long wooden platform out in the bog. It was devoid of any building other than a green-painted shelter, close to which two uprights grew out of a derelict flower-bed to support a board on which was painted 'Killasta Junction' in large white letters. The bed, edged with sharp stones, was filled with straggling nasturtiums.

'That's a strange name,' said Mrs Van Kroot. 'I heard my mother mention that name once, and it stuck in my mind. She died when I was ten, and then my father took us from America to South Africa, where he became manager and then partner at the vineyard. Both my mother and father came from Ireland, but I don't know from exactly where, though I do remember now that this

was their station. Isn't it strange that I should come to it by such a chance? When I grew up I tried to ask my father about Ireland, but he said he had a sore heart and would not speak of it. He had forgotten it since he left on the 1st of August 1900. I must have been nearly five years old then, but I don't remember it at all.'

As she spoke on, the sun drew back behind the evening bank of cloud and was extinguished as a candle by a snuffer. Sky and land turned grey. A thin mist started to fall, turning to lead-colour the granite chips on the platform, and I heard once again the cry of the curlews across the desolate bog mingling with the lament of a broken-hearted old woman in a black shawl.

## Two Years in the Persian Gulf

### *Recollections of a Rating*

ARTHUR MORRIS

OLDER readers may remember that soon after the First World War there was a great reduction in the armed forces of the country. The Geddes axe went to work with a will, and the Royal Navy, of which I was a member, was drastically reduced. Ships were laid up and officers and men discharged daily, and when my own ship arrived at her home port we were paid off forthwith and given three months to find a job on another ship, or retire to 'the Beach!'

This came as a blow to me. I had fourteen years' service behind me, including six years war service in the North Sea and in the Baltic, from 1914 to 1920, and had been anticipating a less rigorous life in peace-time. Moreover, there was a pension in the offing. By a happy chance, however, I saw in the paper one evening that Captain X, whom I had served with as steward before the war, had been appointed

to a sloop going to the Persian Gulf. I immediately wrote to him offering my services and got the reply that he was willing to take me with him, provided I was a volunteer for the job, for white stewards, he said, were not allowed to serve in that part of the globe. This uplifted me no end. It would be a change from cold climates, anyway.

On the appointed day, then, I sailed for Gibraltar with the Captain, to commission the new ship, an old minesweeper that was being specially fitted out for service in the Persian Gulf. On arrival at Gibraltar we found that the ship would not be ready for three months, so we settled down in a club ashore until such time as we could move in.

At last came the day for our departure, and after a farewell dinner on board with a few close friends, including the American Consul, we set out on our long voyage to the Persian

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Gulf. It interested me to reflect that this was the first ship in which I had been able to sit down to meals. In all my previous ships there had been no room. We used to eat standing cheek by jowl. The thought was a satisfying one, as this was to be my home for the next two years.

A brief stay at Malta, to take on more coal, gave an opportunity to look around. I could have wished to stay longer, but off we set on the morning tide. We bumped along at a steady eight knots, I finding my new type of craft very unwieldy and lumbering after the sleekness of destroyers, and with a head-wind and a choppy sea the Mediterranean can be quite unsociable on occasions. This was one of them.

Arrangements had been made for us to take on a native crew at Aden, and a motley crowd trooped on board—twenty seamen and twenty firemen, very picturesque in their bright-hued robes and headgear. Seedy-boys they were called, with a tinsel of seedies or petty-officer at their head. They were issued with seamen's uniform the same as our ratings, and this while on board they were obliged to wear as members of His Majesty's Navy. Mighty uncomfortable they looked, too, with ill-fitting clothes hanging on their spare frames and naval boots on feet that had never known footwear before. Their presence was due to the fact that white personnel could not be exposed to the heat of the sun in the Tropics. The seamen were quite useful for painting the ship's side, boat-work, and so on, but the firemen were not so reliable, the artificial heat of the stokehold bowling them over just as it did the white ratings.

Having taken on stores and coaled ship once again, we set off on the last lap of our journey, along the southern coast of Arabia, till we dropped anchor in Muscat harbour, our future headquarters. This was in March 1921. The British representative, or political agent, as he was styled, came on board with instructions as to our future programme, and was followed later by the local Sheikh, who was responsible for our fresh food, water, and so forth. They left, and we resigned ourselves for the next two years to a seemingly endless existence in this God-forsaken spot, where time seemed to stand still.

**M**USCAT has been described as the hottest place on earth, and I can well believe it

must be, particularly at night. The harbour is bounded on three sides by high rocks which gather the heat of the sun during the day and radiate it at night, so that life becomes almost unbearable after sundown, the very air being like a blast from a furnace, and sleep quite out of the question.

After two months of this, the weakest among us gave up. Strong, healthy-looking youths wore to a shadow, and it became necessary to invalid a dozen or so of them home. It is significant to note that the worst sufferers were those that did not take their rum ration. For myself, I say quite frankly that I am convinced that I was enabled to last out the commission only by the Captain's insistence on my taking a glass of whisky every night in addition to my tot of rum. Alcohol was, in fact, the best safeguard against infection by the myriads of sand-flies with which we were pestered. Despite mosquito-nets in which we enshrouded ourselves, the wretches would sting with a kick like a mule any part of the body showing through. I remember the canteen manager being almost stung to death. His body was a mass of sores and it took the sick-berth attendant the best part of an hour each day applying a yellow ointment; by the time he had finished, the poor fellow looked more like a leopard than a human being.

It was the custom in those days, and probably is to-day, for ships calling at Muscat and remaining there for any length of time to paint the ship's name on the surrounding rocks. With the accumulation of names of ships long since forgotten, the rocks had come to look like some gigantic boarding. Each name was higher than the last, so that our enthusiasts had a difficult task in scaling the rock to reach a suitable place. However, they managed to get it done at last, and there stood out in bold letters, bigger and higher than the others, H.M.S. *Crocus*.

Our business in the Persian Gulf was the suppression of the slave traffic, still being practised by the Arabs. They would raid the Persian coast, grab as many captives as they could, and ship them off to another port, where they found a ready sale for them.

To assist in tracking down these traders a Persian interpreter was appointed to the ship. He was a sinister, inscrutable fellow, very bland to one's face, and I never could decide whether he was friend or foe. It was his job to search any suspicious-looking dhow we met, but at sea this was seldom possible, a dhow's

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speed easily outstripping ours. Sometimes, though, we would surprise a suspect at anchor in port, and our Persian would board her. Invariably, however, he would report 'No slaves' on his return to our ship. It was guessed that he was in the pay of the traders. Still, there was one occasion when he came back with a report that eleven slaves were concealed beneath the bottom boards of a dhow. Thereupon we sent an armed party on board and rescued the unfortunates from their cramped quarters. Having taken particulars of the master of the dhow, we set sail for Muscat, where, after having given the poor half-starved creatures a good meal on the way, we handed them over to the political agent for repatriation to their homes.

**D**URING the summer months we set off on a cruise up the Gulf on the Arabian side, calling at isolated villages on our way. Usually the local Sheikh would pay us a visit, arriving on board with a bodyguard, and bringing gifts of water-melons, dates, and other fruit, which were very welcome.

One time we were presented with a gazelle, a beautiful creature with the softest eyes, but quite out of place on the hard wooden deck of a ship. It had the digestion of an ostrich and would lick the paint off the ship's side as fast as it was applied; and oily waste thrown in the scuppers was relished. 'Herbert,' as he was named, was put under my charge, and I was at my wit's end to feed him, till one day, as I was purchasing some fish from a native boat, Herbert popped his head over the side and the fisherman, on seeing him, promised to bring some food for him the next day. This he did—branches of green dates, and some green-stuff of sorts which I could not name; it looked withered and limp in the heat of the day, but it recovered marvellously when put in water, and it was much appreciated by Herbert.

We also had a cat named 'Shamus,' and it was great fun watching the two, or rather Shamus, trying to play; Herbert, for his part, looked insulted and sought to butt Shamus, and the cat would retaliate by hanging on to Herbert's long neck with its forepaws.

It was getting on for midsummer by now and the heat from the desert—we were never far from the shore—was terrific. A hot dry wind parched everything. A canvas bath was rigged up on the upper-deck with a continual

flow of salt water passing through it. The temperature of the water was a little below that of the air, and most of us spent all our spare time in the bath, sitting up to our necks in it for coolth. There was no need for a towel on getting out of it either, for our bodies would dry off in a few minutes, leaving a fine coating of salt, which helped to ward off the flies. In the Captain's saloon there was an electric-fan in each corner and an aeroplane propeller revolving overhead. These were very useful generally in keeping the place cool, but when a hot wind was blowing from the desert they simply intensified the heat, with the result that the chairs were too hot to touch and the polished table developed blisters on its surface.

The tremendous heat played havoc with the foodstuffs too. Tins of all kinds kept exploding, and, even if they were good when opened, the contents were in a liquid state. Corned beef, for instance, was eaten like soup.

The mail-boat was due once a month with food-supplies—potatoes, fruit, rice, and so on. We were catered for by the Indian Government, and the arrival of the mail-boat was a red-letter day. The boat was the only connection between us and the outside world, and in a sense it was our sole diversion, as, apart from a limited ship's library, which was soon exhausted, we had none of the relaxations such as would be expected to-day. There was no wireless then—at least we hadn't a set, and there were no cinema-films—just boredom, utter boredom, where one saw the same faces for weeks, aye months, on end, and hardly a pleasant word was spoken until sundown, when the rum ration would be issued and tongues loosened. Little wonder, then, that when the mail-boat hove in sight we all stopped work and waited expectantly for the sacks to arrive on board, when they were soon emptied out on the deck and distributed to the ship's company.

Of the foodstuffs, the oranges and mangoes would be eatable, as would also the rice, still in the husk and evil-smelling, but the potatoes were usually in a rotting condition and had to be thrown overboard as they were delivered. Picture, then, a meal of corned-beef soup, followed by stinking Indian rice, which could only be eaten by holding one's nose.

There were rare occasions when we were able to obtain fresh meat from shore, or chickens. The chickens were issued one between two men, and it was usual to toss up

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for it, there being hardly a meal for one on the birds. Whenever we were lucky enough to get fresh meat, it had to be killed and cooked in the early hours of the morning, otherwise it would go bad during the day. Once we had the good fortune to surprise a turtle basking in the sun at low tide. It was soon hauled on board and the ship's cook promptly turned it into a delicious stew—a rare treat.

Here I must record a peculiar thing. The heart of the turtle was seen to be still beating after being taken from the body, and it was watched with interest all day. Not until sundown did it cease to beat. I have heard since that the same phenomenon can be observed with conger-eels. No matter how much they are cut up, the nerves remain active till sunset.

**D**URING all these long months no one was allowed to land and the confinement to the ship was becoming very tiresome. By now we had arrived at Bahrein, a sizeable town, and here I persuaded the Captain to allow me to go ashore on a foraging expedition, in the hope of obtaining something new in the way of eatables. I took the interpreter along with me and got him to conduct me through the market, a place of indescribable confusion, stench, and noisy Arab bartering. As we moved from stall to stall, the attendant in charge would wave a huge fan to and fro over the counter, and there would rise up a very blanket of flies, a solid mass of them, disclosing meat, fish, or whatever was on sale. I was so sickened at the sight that I got out into the open air as soon as possible, and, as we left, the flies settled down again on the food, covering it completely.

It was at Bahrein that I saw slavery in its crudest form. It was the pearl-oyster fishing season and about a hundred boats were creeping methodically over the oyster-beds. Fitted to each boat were three long poles, jutting out on either side, and at the end of every pole dangled a youth, suspended by a rope, and with a large stone tied to his feet and a basket fastened to his waist. At intervals the rope would be slackened off and the youth would descend to the sea-bed in quick time owing to the weight attached to his feet. After two or more minutes had elapsed he would be swiftly hauled to the surface and his basket emptied of its contents. This performance would be repeated all day,

and the strain on the unhappy youth would be so great as to cause blood to flow from his ears. Only the strongest could survive this treatment for long and the usefulness of these slaves was reduced to a few years. I remember one old fellow at Muscat, a former pearl-fisher, who for a rupee would go down and remain under water for three minutes. Whilst we were lying at anchor one night, one of these poor devils escaped and swam to us under cover of darkness. He was in a pitiable state, his arms and legs showing weals where he had been burned with hot irons for refusing to take part in the pearling operations.

It was one of our jobs to collect royalties for the Indian Government from the Sheikh of Bahrein for the pearl-fishing rights—a comic opera affair, following the same procedure every year. The Sheikh, accompanied by a numerous bodyguard fully armed, would come on board with gifts of fruit, etc., and would protest his inability to pay the taxes. After a long-drawn-out session, he was given twenty-four hours' grace. When this was up, a messenger would arrive on board to say that his master still could not raise the wind. The Sheikh would then be informed that if the money was not sent on board within the next twenty-four hours a bombardment would take place and his palace be destroyed. When the ultimatum had expired, we would open fire and, with a few well-directed shots, bring down a couple of minarets in a cloud of dust. The next day a messenger would arrive, complaining of the damage done, and stating that part of the taxes had been collected, but that there was no hope of raising the full amount. Our next move would be to open fire again, and, after a few shots had been loosed, a white flag would be hoisted and a boat sent off from shore loaded with boxes of rupees in full payment of the taxes due for the year. When they had been counted, and a receipt given, we would up anchor and make for Basra, up the Euphrates, bumping over the sandbank at the mouth of the river on our way, to clean the ship's bottom.

**I**T was August 1921 when we arrived at Basra, during a terrific heat-wave. Even the natives were collapsing. The *Iraq Times* published a chart for the past three months showing that the highest temperatures for thirty years had been recorded—128 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade at noon.



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Basra is a good-sized town, as we could see from the ship, and, although it was forbidden for anyone to land in the daytime, I was so desperate for something new in the way of food that I called a bellum (local bumboat) alongside one morning and, taking another steward along with me, went ashore. We managed to get some fresh fruit and vegetables and arrived back on board more dead than alive. I regret to say that the poor fellow I took with me succumbed to heatstroke a few days after. This experience was enough for me, and I never ventured ashore again. More than a third of the ship's company were *hors de combat* with the heat. It was overpowering, and it was a relief, after burying three of our men, to get down river again and out into the open sea.

With the death of one steward out of four, it was decided to send the remainder home and get a native staff from Bombay. Actually this should have been done on arrival in the Gulf. I was given the option of going or staying, and elected to remain on. In due course the new staff arrived—a cook and two stewards. De Sousa, the senior of the stewards, a dignified, grey-haired old man, was wearing his South African War medals.

The arrival of the new staff heralded a revolution in the menus, for a knowledge of native foodstuffs enabled the production of meals unheard of before, and it was a bit of a shock to me to learn from the cook that the green-stuff I had been feeding to Herbert was really spinach. Everything was turned to account, and we began to live again, as long as something fresh was obtainable. Poor old De Sousa had a horror of tin-openers. I had a goodly stock of tinned stuffs still, but he would not open a single tin except in case of dire necessity. I have seen him standing on deck scanning the horizon day after day, waving a white cloth in the hope of attracting the attention of some fisherman. He worried himself ill, and eventually he disappeared overboard one dark night, and was never seen again.

**A**FTER a brief stay at Bushire, where British troops were stationed, with whom we exchanged courtesies, we continued our tour down the Gulf on the Persian side, experiencing here all the horrors of tropical dampness. The moisture was all-pervading, and everything was wet, warm, and sticky.

It has always been my custom to roll my own cigarettes from the tobacco issued in the Navy, but this was impossible here, perspiration running from one's face, elbows, fingers all the time, in spite of copious counteracting draughts of warm lime-juice and a hot cup of tea in the afternoon—yes, hot tea is cooling.

On the subject of drinking-water, I should explain that we were specially fitted out at Gibraltar with a cooling apparatus which was supposed to give us cold water to drink, and sometimes ice. It had, however, a dual purpose. The first, and more important, was to keep down the temperature in the magazines lest the ammunition explode. This done, the operator would switch over to the water-tanks, but, before any appreciable difference was noticeable, the magazine temperatures would be up and requiring attention again. Consequently, we seldom got cool water to drink, let alone ice. The nearest we got to cold water was by hanging up chatties, native earthenware vessels, in the wind. It was only at Muscat that we were allowed to take on water from ashore. Otherwise, it was distilled on board, and always warm. The ship itself, even with double awnings overhead and awnings rigged out over the ship's side, was still hot to the touch. Rain was unheard of in these parts. On arrival at Muscat we were told that there had been no rain for the past thirty years.

Whilst lying at Muscat, I was somewhat mystified by sounds in the distance resembling bagpipes. On inquiring the reason from the interpreter, he smiled his inscrutable smile, and promised to show me what caused them. We landed one afternoon and he conducted me through the village to the outskirts of the desert, and here the mystery was solved. A very primitive way of drawing water was in progress. Near a deep well was a huge reservoir, and next to the well a deep pit had been dug, with steep steps leading to the bottom. Down these steps an ox went laboriously, led by a native, and attached to the ox was a rope running over a wheel set above the well. At the loose end of the rope was a whole ox-skin suspended by the four legs. When the ox was above ground, the skin would be at the bottom of the well, and when the ox was at the bottom of the pit, the skin full of water would be above ground, and, catching on a bar of wood, decanted into the reservoir. The whole structure was made of wood and the 'bagpipes' were the creaking of

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wood on wood as the wheel over which the rope passed slowly revolved.

AFTER six months in the Gulf the entire crew were hardly recognisable as ordinary decent Britishers. Unshaven most of us—it was too painful; half-clad—usually a pair of shorts at the most; spotted and blemished by insect bites; pale-looking and washed-out—no sun-tan here. When autumn came, then, and we proceeded north again, it was to our great joy that it grew perceptibly cooler every day and we began to breathe more freely. Then came the day when we were ordered to don our ordinary blue clothing, and on arriving at Basra to spend Christmas there we were permitted to go ashore in the daytime, a blessed relief after being confined to the ship for the past nine months.

Basra in the winter-time can be quite pleasant. It was really cold some mornings, and I have seen rime on the river-bank at dawn. We fraternised a lot with the British troops stationed there—football matches, and so on. They were a grand bunch of fellows, and from this and other experiences it has always been a source of wonder to me how it is that, when abroad, the soldier and sailor are the best of pals, yet at home they are hardly ever seen together.

The Army authorities did us well. I remember one particular day. The Arabs were holding their annual race-meeting about twenty miles inland, and lorries were placed at our disposal to attend. It was tremendously exciting. Some of the fastest horses in the world were running, and the diminutive Indian jockeys looked more like apes than human beings. The meeting was the event of the year out there and lakhs of rupees changed hands that day.

It was on this trip that we visited the reputed original site of the Garden of Eden, complete with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, an ancient stump, nailed off and held in high reverence by the natives.

After Christmas was over we sailed out into the Persian Gulf once more, all the better for the relaxation we had had at Basra, and soon the sole topic of conversation was our refit, which was due in March. The ship would have to go into dock at Bombay, and we were all agog for news of our sailing for that port. However, it was April before we arrived there, and, seeing the ship safely in dry-dock, we all

had to clear out and live in the sailors' home ashore. The docks were very unhealthy, infested with mosquitoes and what not. All the same, the change was welcome, and we spent a very enjoyable month.

It was in Bombay that Herbert met his fate. I had had a rope spliced round his neck, so that he could not slip out of it, and tied him up securely to a locust-tree in the grounds with plenty of scope for running about, but, alas, next morning the rope was severed and Herbert was missing! I learned afterwards that gazelles were considered a delicacy by the natives.

The refit over, we sailed for Colombo in Ceylon, there to spend a fortnight in the hills to recuperate and reformat ourselves for another spell in the Persian Gulf. Our sojourn in the hills was over all too soon. We returned to Colombo one fine morning and got the ship ready for sea again. Arriving back at Muscat, we resigned ourselves to another spell of Dante's inferno, enlivened this year by the arrival of H.M.S. *Renown* in the Gulf, on a world tour with the Prince of Wales.

LATER on in the year we received orders to proceed to the Red Sea, making our headquarters at Aden. This was a welcome change, for, despite the Barren Rocks and all that, the amenities were fairly good, and, with British troops garrisoned there, we had ample opportunity for recreation ashore.

It was while we were at Aden that the British Government, for some reason or other, were anxious to keep on good terms with the ruler of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, and to this end it had been arranged that he would be brought to Aden and given a display of British military might by the Buffs, the regiment then stationed there. So we were ordered to proceed to Jibuti, in French Somaliland, to embark his dusky Majesty.

He came on board in all the splendour of flowing purple robes, accompanied by half-a-dozen councillors of state and followed by the royal umbrella-holder, a massive negro, with a gorgeously-embellished gamp, which he held over his royal master. Also there was an interpreter, for His Majesty could only speak French, in addition to his own language.

Ceremonies over, we proceeded on our way to Aden, flying the Ethiopian flag, which greatly pleased the Emperor.



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After being shown round the ship, inspecting the guns, etc., the distinguished party were entertained by various members of the ship's company, the simplest things causing great merriment among them. Two men blindfolded, one with a rattle, the other with a stick crawling round on hands and knees trying to locate the rattle and swiping at random caused endless amusement. Two other men, with their torsos tattooed, caused wonderment, and even an attempt to remove the 'paint' with a handkerchief. The visitors may very well never have seen a white torso before. Next a display of boxing was put on, but this proved too much, and the Emperor asked that it be stopped. It seems he and the others could not stand seeing the bruises appearing on the white flesh.

At Aden the Governor came on board and officially welcomed the guests, after which they all landed and were entertained ashore.

The next day the royal party were given a military display, the Emperor inspecting the troops drawn up in full dress on the barrack-square. Later, he was flown over the country in a plane, and, on landing, was taken to a cinema where he was shown himself inspecting the troops. Altogether it had been a hectic time, and by the time the company re-embarked that same evening they looked pretty fatigued.

It was a bit of a problem for me to feed them, as I learned that, owing to religious scruples, they could not touch meat on certain days—and this was one of them. It was here, however, that I was fortunate in having a native cook. He managed to put up a four-course meal composed entirely of fish and vegetables—even the fat used was a vegetable-fat called ghee—which, washed down with lashings of champagne, was a great success. The Emperor was highly delighted with the menu-card, which I had decorated with the British and Ethiopian flags crossed, and, after I had autographed it, he took it away with him as a memento.

The journey home took place at night, so I made the Emperor comfortable in the Captain's cabin. When we arrived off the Somaliland coast in the morning I called him with a cup of tea and a biscuit, whereupon he sat up in bed and clapped his hands and summoned the keeper of the privy purse. When this worthy arrived, he held out a brief-case and the Emperor, diving his hand in, produced a gold medallion which he presented

to me. On making inquiries as to its significance, I was told that it virtually conferred the freedom of Abyssinia on the holder and was only given on special occasions for personal service to His Majesty. During our stay I found it very useful in obtaining supplies of food, and other things, for on showing it to the local merchants I was treated with the utmost respect and could have practically anything I needed for the asking. The medallion was of fine Abyssinian gold, bright yellow in colour, about the size of a shilling, and bore the Lion of Judah on one side, and on the reverse the profile of the earlier Emperor Menelik.

The Emperor was greatly impressed with everything he saw, and particularly with the treatment he had received on board our ship, so much so that he petitioned the British Government to be permitted to bestow a commemoration medal on the ship's company, which, however, is not allowed. Instead, he gave the officers a gold shield and spear apiece as a memento, presented £50 to the ship's fund, and finally, just before we left, addressed to me a letter of thanks, accompanying it with a nugget of pure gold weighing about 4 ounces, which I later had made into a signet-ring.

BY now our two years' commission was drawing to a close. We had served some eighteen months on the station and our thoughts were turning homewards. Our release came sooner than anticipated, however. One fine day a signal from the Admiralty informed the Captain that his services would no longer be required—a fell blow this, after devoting the best part of his life to the service. We all felt very sorry about it, but nothing could be done, and in due course his relief arrived, and the captain took the first available opportunity to go home, obtaining a passage in a tramp-steamer.

I myself was less fortunate, being put aboard a trooper bound for China. Still, I was not unduly perturbed. It would afford an opportunity to visit the Far East before returning home. Alas, my hopes were dashed! The ship was overcrowded, and on arrival at Colombo I was dumped ashore, there to await the ship's return from China. So I spent the Christmas and New Year up in the camp at Diyatalawa, eventually arriving in England on a bitter cold day in January 1923.



## Sabina

### *A Remarkable Nature Artist*

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ERNEST STERN

LOOKING through my old paintings, studies, drawings, sketch-books, and folders is a graphic method of resurrecting the past. That life-size study of a kneeling woman was done in my third year at the Munich Academy. This curly-headed young fellow is Giacomo, the Bersagliere soldier I met by chance in Brescia before World War I. Those charcoal-studies of an athlete were done for my entrance examination—with what trepidation I submitted them! And this portrait of a young woman with fiery red hair is Marie.

Marie was my washerwoman, big-boned and unremarkable—except for her hair. She looked at my work, and expressed naive astonishment that it concerned itself almost exclusively with the human body. 'Don't you ever paint trees and places?' she asked. 'The other artist gentlemen all come out to the Moos. It's lovely there.'

It was thus to Marie that I owed the discovery of the moor landscape to the north of Munich, known locally as the Moos. It was a wonderfully green and luxuriant countryside, intersected by innumerable streams, and rich in graceful birch-trees. The old turf-pits there were full of water, the home of reeds and

water-lilies. The picturesque and tumble-down huts of the old turf-cutters were almost the only habitations, but in the distance on a hill were the roofs of Dachau, a small village, idyllically situated, which had become the centre of an artists' colony known as the Dachauer—a word later to take on a sinister sound as meaning the unfortunate inmates of one of Hitler's most notorious concentration-camps.

The turf of the moor seemed to favour the growth of trees, and at all seasons the typical feature of the moor was the lovely birch. In winter, when snow lay deep everywhere, the birches stood out as black filigree silhouettes; in the spring, the yellow green of their young leaves shimmered in the sun; in summer, the silver markings on their trunks contrasted agreeably with the lush green of their full foliage, a rich brown and gold in autumn. Many years later, when I did the settings for Bruno Walter's production of *Tannhäuser* in Dresden, I tried to translate their colourful autumn glory to the stage.

Apart from artists, almost the only human beings to be seen on the Moos were perhaps a turf-cutter plodding along with his spade over his shoulder, or a peasant woman

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carrying home turf for fuel in a back-basket or in a wheelbarrow.

When I had 'painted myself out' at the Academy, the great Franz von Stuck, my professor, would pack me off for a few days, and then, with my easel and a few necessities, I would go out to the Moos.

In an isolated part of the moor there was an old mill, Beim Wasserbauern. Its high, wooden-tiled roof sat askew on its old cracked walls, and its ancient window-shutters creaked protestingly on rusty hinges. The great wheel no longer turned, and moss had overgrown it.

Frau Water-Miller offered us simple accommodation. After greeting her amiably you went up into the roomy loft, where there were eight beds. If you found a bed without a bag or some article of clothing on it, it was yours. It was the one and only room, and as men and women slept together in it the conventions had to be preserved. This was done by a large notice which read: 'Ladies to bed first; gentlemen follow after lights out.' We were all primitive innocents, and it worked very well.

In the mornings we washed at the pump in the yard and then went into the orchard, where breakfast was served at a number of roughly-carpenentered tables by the girl who otherwise looked after the cows.

It was on the Dachau moor that I first seriously tried my hand at drawing animals. I found it fascinating, but I was never much good at it, and to this day when I have to draw animals it is according to a rough-and-ready system of my own. It was these attempts which first brought me into touch with Sabina.

I HAD been invited to coffee and cake in the house of a friendly peasant and on the walls I immediately noticed some extraordinarily-good sketches of animals, birds, frogs, and insects. The touch of real genius is not easy to describe, but it is recognisable at once. And here it was. The technique was deceptively simple and the result highly original. Each sketch was a gem.

They were the work of Sabina, who turned out to be a slim but well-built girl with rich chestnut hair, blue eyes, and a frank and attractive face bronzed by the sun. She was rather reserved in manner, but in the warmth of my praise she became more talkative and spoke with enthusiasm of her work in the fields, meadows, copses, streams, and lakes

where she found her models. Sometimes, she told me, she would spend hours in the water studying the fish and insect life of the ponds. Encouraged by my interest, she invited me to do some field-work with her, and I gladly accepted.

It was in summer, and one day I went to meet her at the Chiemsee. The low-lying land to the north of the great lake is a labyrinth of smaller lakes, ponds, streams, and canals. Guided by the map which Sabina had sketched for me, I found my way through a wooded and lonely part of the country and came to the place she had marked. It was the bank of a lake edged with tall rushes. Dragonflies skimmed over the water, and now and again a flight of wild-duck would rise and wing away over my head. There was a great humming of life in the air, but not a sign of a human being. I began to think I must have come to the wrong spot—but there it was, clearly marked on the map.

And then the rushes in front of me parted, and the smiling face of Sabina appeared. She tossed a water-lily towards me. 'Grüss Gott!' she exclaimed. 'Strip off and come in.'

I got into a pair of bathing shorts, and lowered myself into the water. It was up to our waists. It was an adventure for me, something new, and what I saw fascinated me. Sabina at work was well worth watching. In the water was a floating leaf which seemed to me moving of its own volition. Sabina took her sketch-book and began to draw. A dark-green, shining insect crawled out of the water on to the leaf. 'A female water-beetle,' she whispered. 'It has attached its eggs to the underside of the leaf.'

She showed me a number of sketches she had made, some of them showing the beetle swimming under water. I watched this underwater sketching. Her sketch-book was in a waterproof cover, and stuck securely in her plaits were a number of sharpened pencils. She put her head under water to observe the beetle from below. When the water was deep she could remain standing, but in shallower parts she would often have to kneel down or crouch. She would stay motionless in such wearying positions for as long as was necessary to finish her sketching, lifting her head only to take a deep breath.

SABINA'S living-quarters here were in an old flat-bottomed barge which lay half in

the water and half on a sandbank shaded with osiers whose longest branches stretched out to form a sort of canopy. The reeds were as high as a man, and they stood upright around the sandbank and the barge like a wall. All around were white and yellow water-lilies, and their great flat leaves almost hid the water.

When we made a break for lunch we clambered on to the barge, and Sabina rummaged around delightedly in my rucksack amongst the eatables I had brought. At our first meeting she had struck me as a very attractive young woman, but here, in her element, she was beautiful—like a water-nymph. Her face and limbs were bronzed, her blue eyes shone, and her long, thick chestnut hair was wound around her head in plaits like a diadem. Her armless dress was wet and it clung to the rich contours of her body. Her bare feet would have graced a classical statue.

When I accepted her invitation I had no idea that we were to live together so closely, on a disused barge far away from any other human habitation. But Sabina was completely free of the usual conventional prejudices and shynesses. When she took off her wet dress and spread it out on a willow branch to dry in the sun she remarked shortly: 'After all, we're colleagues.' And that was the only reference she ever made to the informality of our situation. At night we covered ourselves with our coarse tweed capes and slept side by side. Before long her regular breathing told me that she was asleep. The moon was at the full, and I lay there awake for a while looking at its silvery light. Suddenly in the silence a frog croaked. It was a signal, and soon the night was alive with a great chorus.

In the morning we plunged into the water. Ducks protested noisily and fish fled in swarms as we swam and splashed around. Afterwards we sat on the sandbank and made a breakfast of bread and sausage. 'They're up already,' said Sabina softly, and she pointed to the glistening, iridescent dragonflies which now began to swirl around us. Then she fastened a sort of camouflage harness over her shoulders and under her arms. When it was secured, her head and shoulders were hidden. With her sketch-book fastened to her head and her pencils stuck into her plaits, she slid gently into the water and moved slowly forward until it was almost up to her neck. I could see nothing of her—and neither could the dragonflies which made circles around the clump of rushes which concealed her.

She had brought the drawing of these creatures to the highest pitch of perfection I have ever seen—even the characteristic darting flight was somehow conveyed. I tried to draw them too, but my efforts were clumsy and talentless, and so I turned to the less ethereal ducks. I didn't do very well even with them—perhaps because I would much sooner have sketched Sabina herself. But she was invisible. How she could stand such long immersion astonished me. It was a lovely day, and the sun was shining warmly, but the water itself was quite chilly. She seemed to be hardened to it to an extraordinary degree, and when she finally emerged she just let herself dry in the sun.

THE next day we made a tour of what Sabina called 'Sabina's Reich.' We waded in towards the shore of the lake. Now and again there was a quick rustle in the reeds as some bird started up at our approach, and she would whisper its name; more often than not I had never heard of it. For the first and last time in my life I saw a bittern's nest. It struck me as rather clumsily made and it rested on reeds that had been bent over. The mother bird was sitting beady-eyed on her eggs.

Grass and water-hemlock came up to our waists along the bank, and trailing water-weeds wound themselves around our ankles. Everywhere in the rank growth there was a chirping and buzzing in all keys. The place was full of beetles and small winged insects, and, as we made our way forward, startled frogs hopped away in all directions. Frogs and toads were amongst Sabina's specialities. It was through her that I first got to know the difference between them. My studies came in useful many years later when I had to design Caliban's costume for Reinhardt's production of *The Tempest*.

After making our way through this undergrowth for quite a time, we caught sight of a large expanse of water through drooping willow branches. Masses of spurge grew along its banks and the water was so clear that we could see everything that swam around in it. Advancing carefully into the water, Sabina bent down and put her arm in up to the shoulder and waited patiently. And then, with a sudden movement, she withdrew a four-legged little beast coloured brown with an orange belly. 'I thought so,' she said. 'A

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salamander. It's the first I've found here. Lovely, isn't it?"

Involuntarily we spoke in undertones in a silence broken only by the call of the birds, the cooing of wood-pigeons, and the humming and buzzing of innumerable insects. Later we worked our way along a watercourse between black alders. Here and there the trunks of dead trees jutted out of the reeds and on their bare branches sat herons, which rose as we came nearer, flapping away in their lazy magnificent flight. We hid behind a stump and waited patiently for them to return, which, after a while, they did, and we watched them as they moved around sedately, slowly lifting their legs in the shallow water, their long necks gracefully bent as their beaks searched for food amongst the weeds.

After a while we pressed on and worked our way round in a big circle to approach our barge from a different direction. Frequently Sabina would stop to pick up some insect, or perhaps a worm or snail, to examine it carefully and then gently put it back exactly as she had found it.

ONE grey day I was doing my best to sketch frogs. There was no shortage of models, and they remained obligingly motionless on the broad leaves of the water-lilies. Sabina, who had been studying snails, came up. 'What about going into the village for a hot meal to-day?' she asked.

It sounded very attractive. Bread and sausage is all very well, but it palls as a permanent diet. Half-dressed, we waded to the shore and completed our toilet there. As we made our way between the willows it began to rain softly. The lower hills were covered with standing corn, still green, now almost hidden in a mist of rain. 'There's sage growing there,' said Sabina, indicating a watercourse we passed.

I paid no particular attention to the remark; I was more interested in the fact that we could already see the roofs of houses. At the village-inn the plump landlady welcomed Sabina as an old friend. A meal? We could have potato-soup, smoked meat and dumplings, with apfelstrudel to follow.

It was a plain but excellent meal, and we both ate heartily. When we had finished and had drunk our coffee I was leaning back with satisfaction when I observed that Sabina was making her usual preparations for sketching.

'You're not going to do anything more to-day!' I exclaimed. 'It's raining.'

'What does that matter?' she inquired. 'Where there's sage there's Bufo. You go and do your shopping in the village, and I'll meet you afterwards by the bridge we passed.'

I went off to the village-shop and bought various provisions, including half-a-bottle of brandy. With the rain, the weather was a little chilly. Then I went to the bridge to meet Sabina. I waited about for a couple of hours without a sign of her. 'Bufo?' I hadn't even bothered to ask what Bufo meant. Later I found that it was the Latin name for the toad.

I began to grow anxious. I called out several times, but there was no reply. Now and again farm-carts heavily loaded with dung swayed and jolted over the bridge. The clouds were low and it was now raining heavily. Had anything happened to Sabina in that oozy mud? She might have slipped and been unable to get out. I began to imagine terrible things—Sabina stuck fast in that thick, clinging, evil-smelling mud!

And then, when I was on the verge of panic, something under the bridge moved slowly and with difficulty. I ran towards it, and as I did so a black object sailed through the air and landed at my feet. It was Sabina's sketch-book in its waterproof cover. Sabina herself, covered from head to foot in mud, pulled herself up slowly by the stanchions of the bridge, and the mud dropped off her in slimy lumps as she emerged. 'Don't touch me,' she cried. 'I'm all right. Let's get back to the lake. This mud will come off easily enough in clean water.' And she set off at a heavy trot. I could see that she was very exhausted, but she was quite happy. The mud did come off easily enough, and, remembering the brandy, I made her take a good swig. It brought back some of the colour to her cheeks. Anxiously I reproached her for running such risks, but she only smiled. 'I've got Bufo, and that's what I was after. If you're afraid of a little mud you won't get far in this game.'

A SCIENTIFIC publishing house was issuing a natural history series, and Sabina had been commissioned to do the illustrations for insects, small birds, and animals. She had two years for the job.

The following year she intended to concentrate on birds as the winter migrants returned. She had found an ideal place, a disused mill.



The mill-pond and the surrounding lakes and streams were a favourite haunt of birds. She bored holes in the sides of an old wooden box, camouflaged it, rested it on stones in the water at a depth which permitted her to stand upright comfortably with her head inside, and from that vantage-post she could watch the birds without being seen by them, sometimes half through a summer's night.

Thanks to her real genius and to the painstaking accuracy of all her work, she soon attracted the attention of natural science circles and she was invited to join an expedition to the Upper Nile. I had grown very fond of her, and I went to the station. That was the last time I saw her. She died in the Sudan of a snake bite at the age of twenty-three.

## An Old Tour

L. G. DURNO

THE young stranger and I were sitting in the porch of a quiet country church in Suffolk, sheltering until a summer downpour of rain had passed. The mellowness of the red-brick porch—a 17th-century date was there—gave a feeling of friendly warmth to that chill August day. Nevertheless, he and I separately left our seats and, slinking through the coldly severe Norman doorway, gazed around this queer little church; for it had a depressing, sad collection of broken memorials to men who had once been famous: after which we silently and carefully resumed our separate stations.

It was a lonely, remote place, and probably few sightseers ever penetrated there. I ought to have spoken, and once or twice the stranger looked across at me; but he kept on scribbling and scribbling in a large notebook propped up on his knees, and it becomes maddening when one is more or less compelled to watch somebody writing page after page, and not be told what it is all about. I was beginning to wonder whether it would not be less irritating to continue my uncertain wanderings, though that meant getting thoroughly soaked before reaching my car, which I had left in the lane below. So when, after closing his book with a bang, he again boldly stared

at me and suddenly said, 'All that has happened because I live at Strawberry Hill in Twickenham,' I decided that a sidelong look of partial interest would do until I had heard the explanation that was now tumbling out.

'I come from Strawberry Hill,' he was saying, 'and so, almost two hundred years ago, did Horace Walpole. I admit that there is not much other similarity between us, except that I thought I would spend my holiday doing exactly the same tour as Mr Walpole once did in Suffolk.'

'Do you mean to tell me that that fastidious person came to Suffolk of all places and wrote the inevitable letter about it?' I asked.

'Definitely,' he answered, 'in the August of 1755, and a very wet one too—the summer I mean. I daresay that he gave his letter a bit of a polish, because he very well knew that one day it would be published, and read—heaven knows by whom! I have at last completed the tour, for this odd little church, where you and I are sitting and waiting, and where once Mr Walpole sat and waited, marks the end. But I want your advice.'

'If it is whether you, too, should write a letter about it,' I cautiously began, darting an anxious eye at the thick notebook, 'remember that it will not be one addressed to

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me, and, as you have implied, Strawberry Hill letters are read, if at all, mostly by those who come afterwards.'

'But,' he replied excitedly, 'if you have nothing to read, nothing to do, and nothing to think about, and it's raining hard, and you can't go out, you welcome listening to anybody and anything. That's why one rainy afternoon I told some of the chaps in our Searchlight battery about Horace Walpole's tour and his visit to the very place on the Suffolk coast where they and I were stationed. I'm not going to pretend that I was clever enough to see that it would result in getting a laugh from them, but . . .'

'For goodness' sake,' I interrupted, 'start at the beginning, but stop the very moment this rain stops.'

'Right,' he answered, as I turned up my jacket-collar, settled down in a hard corner, and tried to make the best of it, 'and you can take it from me that this shower won't be nearly as long as some of those times in the Searchlight battery.' And so he began.

'AT one period of the Second War I found myself posted to an S.L. battery near Orford on the coast of Suffolk. There's an old castle on the outskirts of that place, and sometimes we made use of one or two of its rooms, and kept watch from its high turrets. It's just a whacking great tower on a mound. Massive is the proper word to describe it. Inside are all the echoing thrills of an ancient castle, but it is the spacious view, outside on the top, that is so attractive, as you gaze far out to sea, beyond the small town and miles of flat marshland. You will expect me to say that on wild nights the wind from the North Sea whistled right through us; strangely enough, it was quite warm—inside; only it could get pretty dull in pouring rain, if there was nothing doing. Still, it would be hard to imagine anybody who could not rake up some sort of admiration for that massive tower. I had joined there from Strawberry Hill, and so Orford Castle made a big appeal to me, because it happened to be one of the first places Horace Walpole saw on his tour. It's a grand spot, and there's wonderful country round about. Mr Walpole hated it all.'

He opened his notebook, and went on:

'He had a rotten time, but he loved writing about it. After entering Suffolk, Mr Walpole says that he began by driving around "in a

one-horse chair over a wild vast heath to see the remains of Butley Abbey." That makes a pleasant walk across country from Orford, and it has lovely woods and river. His letter merely says that he found it locked and no key forthcoming. He next peered at some stately mansion, and I don't think that he even bothered to leave his carriage, for he writes that if it was not a ruin it looked like one. Of Orford Castle, all that he could find to say was: "It is a ruin."'

'Did you tell that to the chaps in the S.L. battery?' I asked.

'Definitely,' he answered. 'They said nothing, but our Sergeant said: "Good old Horace!"'

After a moment he continued. 'I tried arguing with the Sarge. I told him that to begin with, and just because it was then the windy month of March and not a rainy August, he should go and have a look at Butley Woods himself; for it was springtime, with daffodils by the thousand to be seen there. Again, I said, he would be the first to point out that things never looked their best in drenching rain and mud; and then, realising that this was becoming dangerous, I tried to edge away attention by telling him how Mr Walpole's day had come to a sticky end. It had rained and rained, and night came on, and he and the one-horse chair, having got hopelessly lost in the dark, ended up some time about dawn by doing a skid and turning over into the mire. "Into what?" the Sarge had asked. "Mire," I repeated, "Horace Walpole's word." The Sergeant, who for the last few minutes had been eyeing my boots and general appearance, said: "Talking about ruddy mud . . .", and became purely technical. After that, the battery called me "One-horse Horace," or "Horace" for short.'

'A good audience,' I commented, 'for they reserved their flippancy till the end. Is that all?'

I felt only too certain that there must be more. Still, it might be interesting to see how this obscure little place, where we were talking, got into Walpole's tour; and so I made no further remark, nor did I get a chance, for he had started again.

'How can it be all until this rain stops? Not that you'll hear any more concerning our S.L. battery as we got moved on, and never returned to Suffolk; but, at the time of our departure, the Sarge called out to me: "Horace, you'll have to keep the rest of that



trippery tour of yours till after the War, and mind you finish it then properly."

All that was over and done with some years ago, and, a civilian now, he was revisiting scenes and still following up Walpole's tour.

'PLANNING a different kind of holiday,' he explained, 'I suddenly remembered the Sergeant's parting orders and decided that this August I would do that old tour properly. It wouldn't take long on a push-bike, for the places visited were not many. How little is told by that letter! The first halt was Harwich in Essex, and all that Mr Walpole says is that he went there "to visit the new salt-water baths." Ipswich, the old seaport and county-town of Suffolk, is mentioned as a bare name. I've told you all he had to say of the Orford area. The tour concluded with a special journey to see a certain historic house. That is where my difficulties began, for the letter doesn't give the name of the place or any indication of its direction. It's rather mysterious, since it was the one place concerning which he had quite a lot to write.'

He again consulted his notes. 'The letter says it was "an old house built by Secretary Naunton." A mid-Victorian edition of the Letters offers a helping footnote and explains that this was Sir Robert Naunton, very important as Secretary of State to King James I, but slightly more interesting for his anecdotes about Queen Elizabeth and her favourites. That was something, but where the well-meaning editor led me astray was by rashly interpolating in the text the name of a famous Suffolk village, though any visitor will discover it to be palpably the wrong one. After following several similar false trails, to-day I've arrived here at the right place; but I've no complaints.'

The quest had taken him and his bicycle through the green lanes and byways of Suffolk and through that indescribable blue-green colouring which in summer is to be found all over its shallow vales. But if the valleys are mere scoops, the twisting hills down into them are surprisingly steep, and the streams are often unbridged and of a most unexpected depth.

Those were discoveries that he said he had enjoyed. This morning, for example, being tempted to round a steep corner at a smart speed, he became aware that a river below possessed a ford only and no bridge, and it

was not till then that he remembered that his modern version of a one-horse chair had no brakes worth applying. His only regret was that the chaps were not present to see what had happened, and he would now agree with the Sergeant that mire was not a satisfactory word.

'Mr Walpole found this place easily enough,' he continued, 'for on his last day he knew where he was going. But it wasn't the rain that kept him waiting in this porch. A Naunton descendant, then living here, is described in the letter as "a strange, retired creature," who for some time was unwilling to let Mr Walpole see the old house. So he filled in the time by mooching around in the church near by, cheering up when he discovered it to be full of "cross-legged knights and painted tombs of Nauntons" and others, all in great array.'

'But how can this be the right place, when there is nothing of the kind here?' I cried.

'Because I've heard in the last few days,' he answered, 'that a terrific family feud blew up, with many Nauntons claiming this property. It happened shortly after Mr Walpole's visit. Old-fashioned gossip has it that one claimant was determined to remove all records of any rival's history, and smashed up the monuments in the church. Was it done by "the strange, retired creature"? I don't know, any more than I know who altered the old house into that delightful place of Georgian windows in the garden up yonder. Anyhow, nothing of the memorials is left but fragments, retrieved and stuck higgledy-piggledy on the walls many years afterwards.'

He jumped up and, pulling me into the church, pointed to scraps of faded, broken words, many of which were missing. 'Up there,' he explained, 'I can make out something about someone "... whose in the dayes of King Henry 8 baere the Offices of Vice-Chamberlayne and Captayne of the Garde ..."; and there in front of us you have all the proof of the tour—an incomplete tribute, which Horace Walpole saw complete: "... Sir Robert Naunton, Counsellor of State to our late King James of happy memorie ..."'

He suddenly made for the door and looked outside. 'The rain has stopped, and so have I,' he said abruptly.

I was hustled out into the warm sunshine, and it was all I could do to keep up as he briskly strode through the tranquil little churchyard and down the hillside. The

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summer evening was all fragrance after the rain, and the road ambled down to water-meadows and willow-trees. He picked up his machine, a somewhat mudstained concern, from the ditch and was ready for the road. 'This is where I start back for modern, built-up Strawberry Hill,' he said. 'I'll be reporting to the Sarge that I've finished the tour properly, and his wife and he will be interested to hear of it. I came across him recently in London. It seems that he had returned to have a look at Suffolk some time before me, and had got married not far from where we used to be stationed. The advice I meant to

get from you was whether I need mention the name of this peaceful place.'

'I think you should be like Horace Walpole,' I replied, 'and forget to mention that, unless they ask.'

'The Sarge, at any rate,' he said, 'can only talk of one place, and that in rather a vague way, for, when I saw him, the only sense I could get out of him was a dreamy murmuring of something about "Butley Woods in daffodil-time".'

'Then we can all agree that the tour has been done properly,' I managed to get in as he set off home.

## Exclusive Newport, U.S.A.

### T. KERR RITCHIE

THOUGH it is only an hour away, numerous New Yorkers have never been to Coney Island in summer, and they will tell you this popular locality is only for the crowd—while they are higher-caste Republicans. The average native of Brooklyn or the Bronx betakes himself for a vacation to one of the lovely watering-places along the coast of Maine, or hits the high spots for the lakes among the Adirondack Mountains. He may retire to his country property up the Hudson River or over in Long Island next door. He may hustle by air to the beaches of California or Florida, and tell you on his return all about the joys of surf-bathing at Santa Barbara or the delights of Miami. Actually, in California, he spent most of his split-seconds scrawling postcards in a hotel at Los Angeles fronting on a wide boulevard, down the vast length of which an endless belt of motor traffic speeds past neon-signs and movie-houses, radio-stations, drug-stores, restaurants of every kind, malted milk parlours selling what are advertised as 'Mile High Ice Cream Cones,' and giant markets exhibiting whole blocks of

brilliant fruit and vegetables arranged with Einsteinian perfection.

Your sober-minded business man from Manhattan will be sure to attend a convention of his brethren in trade or commerce near by at Atlantic City, and, when tired of the breezy handshaking and speechmaking, will visit the much-advertised annual competition of bathing-girls for the title of 'Miss America' down at the vast show-place on the steel pier. On the whole, the New Yorker's summer resorts might be card-indexed according to the social standing or income of the individuals or families who frequent them. In the index the name of Coney Island would be inconspicuously dull black on plain white paper, while Newport would be shown resplendent on true-blue parchment in golden Gothic letters.

There is an apocryphal story that sixty years ago a great American hostess, the late Mrs Stuyvesant Fish, had the idea of reuniting for one evening the élite of New York society. After examining credentials, consulting experts, weighing reputations by the

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carat, and peeping into bank balances, she invited four hundred guests, the resulting gathering forming the cream of the cream. This mythological party has ever remained famous in the annals of New York. Some sceptics declare that the Four Hundred have been kidnapped mysteriously; but these sceptics have never been to Newport.

**T**HIS little place in the State of Rhode Island, about midway between New York, Washington, and Boston, is as select as the Jockey Club in Paris, the most Conservative club in London, or the most Communist club in Moscow. Useless to go to Newport if you are not well versed in pedigrees or the inner circles of finance or politics. There is no Palace Hotel to receive you, as the only public inns are two honest old-fashioned hosteries which possess merely a score of bedrooms each. Even if the average New Yorker wants to go on the beach he must be a member of the Yachting Club, and that means he must show up brightly on the American Social register.

Perhaps a bold buccaneering spirit, with a black patch over one eye, may find an impoverished aristocrat who consents to let his palatial villa for the season. But the buccaneer will gain nothing socially, save crocodile tears, because if he is not of the clan or coterie he will be reduced to his own resources. He will be received by nobody, and unable to bathe his corns or his bald pate in Neptune's Atlantic Ocean, no matter how much he feels hurt.

At Newport all the world knows all the world, and all the world entertains in one or other of the two-hundred-odd magnificent private villas, which are set like *Arabian Nights* abodes of bliss overlooking the sparkling waters of Narragansett Bay. If you are invited to a villa owned by well-known people all the doors without exception are instantaneously open to you, and American hospitality in any stratum of society has hardly its parallel under heaven. It is overpowering for the weak-kneed, half-witted, cockeyed foreigner.

**T**HE fortunes of Newport reached their apogee around 1900. Old ladies in Fifth Avenue will tell you, while their eyes glisten suspiciously, that it was the heyday of American society, the time of marvellous fêtes when forgotten Harry Lehr led the gay cotillions or quadrilles for which the prizes were bracelets of diamonds for the ladies and gold cigarette-cases studded with rubies for the gentlemen; when the old Mrs Astor and Mrs Stuyvesant Fish disputed between them the sceptre of royalty.

In these days horses champed their bits impatiently while held by English grooms near lawns well trimmed by Scottish gardeners. People with famous names in New York, Washington, or Boston would have blushed not to be seen at Newport at the time of the regattas. Each one had his graceful sailing-yacht anchored in the sunny bay, and pestiferous motor-launches had not been invented. Victorias and Tilburys, polished and trimmed by London coachbuilders, promenaded the ladies in hats large and decorative as rockery gardens. Hands well-gloved—because at any cost one must not get sun-burned—held dainty parasols of precious duchesse lace, to protect the lily and rose of fair complexions.

Here the Perry Belmont built a fairy-like palace of white marble, and the Marquis Boni de Castellane courted Miss Gould. Here the old Mrs Vanderbilt erected 'The Breakers,' a vast French château, which was inherited on her death by her daughter, the Countess Szechenyi, wife of a former Hungarian minister at the Court of St James's.

Without a doubt Newport is in the first rank and still in favour. One reads the outstanding names of European heraldry occasionally in the local social register, but the little port has barnacles steadily encroaching on the piles of its wharf and it lives more and more in radiant souvenirs of the past; less numerous are the white-winged yachts and less brilliant the fêtes. Nevertheless, in this transient era of decrepit demagoguery and utopian moonshine or utilitarianism, Newport as ever really opens her doors wide only for the select—and that in the United States merits well to be noted.



## Build me a Thatch

LAURIE TESTER

ANYONE who has lived under a thatched roof knows the advantages of this type over one made of tile or slate. Not only is it pleasant in appearance, but it has also a long life and a high degree of insulation. In fact, it is said that thatch is more than seven times as resistant to changes in temperature as tiles, and more than twelve times as resistant as slates, which means that a thatched cottage is cool in summer and warm in winter. Another important advantage is that the insulation keeps out extraneous noises even in the heaviest of rain-storms.

Dating back as it does many thousands of years, thatching must be one of our oldest crafts. Indeed, the word itself goes back to the times of the Saxons. The earliest mention of church-roofing speaks of a covering of thatch, and the Venerable Bede recalled that when Finan succeeded St Aidan in the bishopric, about the middle of the 7th century, he built a little church on the Isle of Lindisfarne, off the coast of Northumberland, constructing it 'after the manner of the Scots, of hewn oak and covering it with reeds.'

During the 13th century, thatch was still a great favourite for roofing, and King John used to boast how good a thatcher he was. Gradually, however, as other roofing materials became available, thatch came to be regarded

as a sign of poverty, and in the year 1530 one Palsgrave wrote: 'I am but a poore man, synthe I cannot tyle my house, I must be fayne to thache it.'

By the time of the 19th century this prejudice had reached such a pitch that nearly all the thatched churches in Britain had had their thatch replaced by other forms of roofing. Indeed, one parish which could not afford a completely new roof on its church merely replaced the side nearer the road, in the hope that the remaining thatch would be out of sight!

In Norfolk there are still sixty thatched churches, although even in this county the thatch was stripped off more than two hundred churches by the Victorians. In Suffolk there are still seventeen thatched churches (an eighteenth was bombed during the War), but, apart from one such church in the Isle of Wight, it is doubtful if there are any left in Britain outside East Anglia, although in Cornwall there still remain a number of thatched meeting-houses and chapels. Among these is the well-known Congregational meeting-house at Horningsham, which was built in 1566 and is generally considered to be the oldest Nonconformist place of worship in Britain.

Great expanses of thatch may often be seen

on farm barns, and the thatched tithe-barn at Broomfield in Kent is 187 feet long. Even longer is another tithe-barn at Tisbury in Wiltshire, which is believed to have the largest thatched roof in Britain.

THE old generation of thatchers are an independent body of men, who like to make most of their tools. The shears are mostly bought, of course, and the village blacksmith may have fashioned the thatching-needle, but the paring-knives are usually made out of an old scythe blade, set in a rough handle. The comb is generally nothing more than a piece of wood with a set of long nails knocked through it, but is none the less efficient for all that, while the picturesque-sounding legat, which is used to drive the butts of the straw level with the roof, consists merely of two pieces of wood.

Thatching is not carried out during the winter months, for one old observation is as true to-day as it was in 1640, when one Henry Best said that 'it will not gette a man heate in a frosty morninge, sittinge on the toppe of an house where the winde commeth to him on every side.' Contrary to general belief, however, a thatcher's trade is not seasonal, for he can be fully occupied the whole year round. Although roof repairs are not carried out during bad weather, the thatcher can work full-time on cutting, splitting, and sharpening sprays and rods. Some of the more versatile men also add occasionally such jobs as the making of coiled mats, armchair seats and backs, log baskets, and straw-plaiting.

THE cost of thatching is calculated by the square—100 square feet—and rates vary according to the materials used, for this is a more expensive item than labour. A typical charge is 1s. per square foot with ordinary straw, 2s. with reed-combed straw, and 3s. with Norfolk reeds. In addition, a thatcher will be pleased to quote anyone extra for such refinements as ornamentations, eyebrows, valleys, and lips. In 1715 a master man thatched a chapel in Cornwall for £67, but in the centuries that followed thatchers received as little as 10s. for every square.

Although they are relatively expensive, reeds are probably the ideal material for thatching, for a reed thatch lasts up to a

hundred years compared with perhaps thirty years with reed-combed straw and twenty years with ordinary threshed straw. But the difficulty to-day is getting reeds, for, although there is any amount growing on the Norfolk Broads, there is a shortage of labour for cutting them. Ordinary straw is the commonest form used for thatching, being only £4 a ton compared with £16 a ton for reed-combed straw, which has to be brought some distance as a rule.

Finding suitable straw, however, is becoming more and more difficult with the growing popularity of artificial fertilisers and combine-harvesters. Wheat straw is best, and it should be neither short nor long, while if it is grown in a dry summer it will make a better thatch than if grown in a wet one. Two varieties of wheat generally considered suitable for thatching are Red Standard and Little Joss, although some thatchers find that Bersee can often be put to good use. It is most important that the straw should be tough with plenty of body, with the goodness going to the straw rather than to the ear. Indeed, the sort of wheat crop that pleases a thatcher rarely pleases a farmer, and vice versa. In the old days, crops were grown specially for thatching, hand-reaped and threshed by flail.

An alternative method is the use of reed-combed straw, which requires only bundling and does away with three-quarters of the ground work, and, although this is more expensive, it is becoming more and more popular. Reed-combing is carried out by a machine attached to the top of a threshing-drum. The sheaves are passed from the rick to a man on the platform, and then to the feeder, who lays them on the platform, cuts the strings, and opens the sheaves. They then pass along the conveyor-belts, and, while the rubbish and ears drop into the threshing-drum, the clean unbroken straw, with all flag, grass, and heads combed off, is carried through unbroken to the other end of the thresher, where it is tied up into bundles. The combing-machine does not slow up threshing, but of course it is an additional expense and it is doubtful whether there are sufficient thatchers in every county to warrant such a machine.

A SERIOUS problem is fire, and I have seen whole rows of cottages which have been badly damaged by fire. Now, however,

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even this danger is past, for it is possible to fireproof thatch quite simply with alum or a similar chemical solution. The treatment has to be repeated every three or four years to be really effective, and it is probably for this reason that so many insurance companies charge higher premiums for houses with thatched roofs.

A problem that has not been solved is the shortage of thatchers, for, although most farmers have someone who can thatch a rick, they are generally beaten when it comes to thatching a cottage or a barn.

More thatchers are badly needed, and the position may well get worse, for so many of the thatchers are over fifty, and there are few recruits to take their place when they retire—or when they die, for most of them don't seem to retire. One difficulty is that the thatchers

have in the past quite naturally jealously guarded their craft and have kept their knowledge and skill within the family. Fortunately, the shortage has now led to a training scheme being formed in which inexperienced recruits to the industry can train under master craftsmen.

There are believed to be only eight hundred thatchers remaining in Britain to deal with perhaps a million thatched roofs. There are probably others, but these are chiefly part-timers, who do it merely at week-ends to supplement their farm pay.

Thatching has been described as a dying craft, and more's the pity, for, as Richard Jefferies has told us, the thatcher is the most important village craftsman, a man of infinite gossip, well acquainted with the genealogy of every farmer.

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### A Ruined Cottage

*Walk by this hedge, where the honeysuckle thrush  
Spun-sugar trumpets, and the Trinity-bramble leaf  
Scrambles red as the linnet. Can you not feel the texture  
Of the air warmer, softer, as Spode, or rain-water,  
As if generations of living had cherished it,  
As if more than the wild bird and the hare  
Haunted the tussocky field? In smoky taprooms  
You will hear, or in records, mellow, yellow with sunlight  
That warmed other men's fingers, find that a cottage  
Stood here. Lie down, and feel, under the turves,  
The bones of the house, the ruined traces of walls.  
Here was the hearth, where the housewife baked her bread  
Sweet as the milky hazel on the hedge,  
Here was the doorstone, scooped hollow as a shell  
By boot, and bare, blunt, stumbling feet of children.  
A curl of china printed with a rosebud  
Once made a heart glow proudly, that now is only  
Cold dust, and she who worried at a chip  
On the lustrous whiteness does not sleep less sound  
Because the cups are ground to dust by the feet  
Of cattle who graze where once her borders bloomed.  
Last of the orchard's score, the Blenheim orange,  
Unconquered by the crab, ripens and grows  
Golden, half-hidden by winding bryony;  
And a rose twists its weak and tenuous shoots  
For one more summer, before the briar prevails.  
Tread softly here. This place, more than the square  
Untended plot by the lichen-covered headstone  
Is the grave of those who warmed and made this air  
Their own. They would find the ruin of their love  
More bitter than death which fondled them like sleep.*

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH.





## The Phantom Gamekeeper

THOMAS MURRAY

EACH spring and autumn I spend a week-end at Fordyke. I go there, I suppose, for the sake of auld lang syne. You see, when I was a youngster at elementary school I spent each year a whole month of my summer holidays at Fordyke. My grandparents and a host of uncles and aunts on my mother's side lived there.

I was city born and bred, and Fordyke seemed to me in those days as countrified a place as I could wish for. It had trees to be climbed, though I was still among the lower branches by the time the local lads had reached the top. It had burns you could wade through. It had fields and long grass and wild flowers—in short, everything the city did not have.

Now, after twenty-five or so years, I see Fordyke rather differently. There are not so many relatives left to visit. I am aware that Fordyke is not half as rural as it was—or seemed to be—in the past. The pit bings are somehow nearer. The council houses look just like the corporation houses in the city. And a bus journey of little more than half-an-hour takes the inhabitants right into the heart of Edinburgh; in fact, I'm sorry to say, some of them are more at home in that city than in their own village. But, for all that, I still set off on a Friday evening, once each spring and autumn, for a week-end

in Fordyke. And it's of my last autumn week-end I am talking now.

THE Saturday afternoon had been fine.

There was just a touch of winter in the air, but it was a day without rain or wind. A fine day for walking. My cousin George and I had set out on our usual walk on these occasions, a roundabout one that took in three miles of footpath by the burnside, a scramble uphill through a bit of woodland, and time to look at the ruins of Crannel Castle before striking back to Fordyke by the main road.

Everything had gone to plan. We reached the cross-roads, looked at our watches, and decided we had time for a mild refreshment at the Farmers' Rest. The Farmers' Rest stands just off the main road and is one of those quiet little inns you come across occasionally in the Lowlands.

We went in, sat down and stretched our legs, and were having our glass of ale very contentedly when a tall chap, probably between fifty and sixty years of age, came in. There were only one or two other customers in the place and I was able to have a good look at him.

His face was browny-red and weather-

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beaten. He was wearing a deerstalker-hat, a long tweed jacket, breeches and leggings; and on his feet were huge boots with toe-caps that made me think of gigantic bunions. I looked inquiringly at my cousin. 'That's Jock Meldrum,' he said. 'He's head keeper on the Duke's estate.'

From the depths of my memory a recollection started up. 'How long has he been there?' I asked.

'All his days,' said George. 'He started there as a laddie.' George said no more about Meldrum, but he had said enough to send my thoughts a long way back—right back to a certain summer's day in my childhood.

I SAID at the beginning that I was city-bred.

At ten years of age nearly all my knowledge of the countryside had been gained in and around Fordyke. But there was still one gap in my rural knowledge. I had never seen a real, live gamekeeper in the uniform and trappings of his trade. Of course, I had my notions of what he should look like. Goodness knows how many boys' school-stories I had read in which a gamekeeper appeared as a stern and revengeful figure. All the drawings accompanying these stories showed him wearing a deerstalker-hat, a long tweed jacket, breeches, leggings, and huge boots with toe-caps like gigantic bunions. In addition, he usually had mutton-chop whiskers and carried a double-barrelled rifle under one arm. Such was the gamekeeper of my imagination. He was already, to my mind, someone to be avoided.

Now, on really hot summer days—and my memory insists there were many of these in my childhood—my Fordyke chums and I were in the habit of making for our private swimming-pool. It was private, indeed, for it was a part of the river that flowed through the Duke's estates. Some Victorian ancestor of the Duke had had the graceful idea of constructing an artificial waterfall by having large stones laid like a dam across the river and excavating below it. The water flowed at a depth of only an inch or two across these stones and above the dam itself was a deep, dark pool. Trees on the north bank gave it a pleasant shade. This was our bathing-pool. I say 'our pool,' because we had used it so frequently that we had come to feel a proprietary right to it.

There were three of us that summer afternoon. We slipped over the wall, crossed the stretch of open grassland to the river, stripped and plunged into the water. None of us possessed bathing-costumes. It would have seemed comic to us to wear one. What was more strange was that none of us could swim. Not that that interfered with our pleasure. We splashed about in the shallows or got ourselves across to the opposite bank by doing a kind of dog-paddle. And we would vary the return journey by getting hold of an overhanging branch and swinging ourselves out across the water. If you took off with sufficient impetus, you were carried most of the way across and landed safely in the shallows. If you didn't, you came to rest hanging halfway over the stream and had to drop into the deepest part. You came up blind and spluttering and had to dog-paddle the rest.

These antics would keep us going for what seemed to be hours. If you got tired, you lay for ten minutes on the grass in the sun and then splashed back into the water. It was a small boy's idea of heaven.

WE had been at it that afternoon for nearly half-an-hour. I was paddling about in the shallow water when one of my chums came hurtling across from the opposite bank by means of the long branch—only this time he did not come to a halt beside me. Instead, he shot past, calling out: 'The gamie! The gamie!'

For a moment I stood quite still. I was panic-stricken. Until then I had been gloriously, idyllically happy. And now, out of a clear blue sky, terror had struck. It was made all the worse by the fact that I had not even seen this terrible and avenging figure and had no idea from where he was coming.

I leaped to the bank. The others were already gathering up their clothes. There was no time to dress. We simply clutched our belongings to our wet, naked breasts and ran across the grass towards the wall of the estate.

I was the last of the three and it made me feel especially vulnerable. I had no idea if the gamekeeper was near or far away, if he was on our side of the river or the other side. But I expected at any moment to feel the earth shaking beneath the steps of those huge boots or to hear his voice baying close behind me.

## THE PHANTOM GAMEKEEPER

And my nakedness might be a target sufficiently tempting for him to fire a load of buckshot after me.

I reached the shelter of the trees, still safe. The others were already scrambling up the wall and my wits were working sharply enough to take note of the footholds they had used. I threw over my clothes, scrambled up the wall, losing some skin in the process, and dropped, without caring in the least, into a bed of young nettles.

My heart seemed to swell with relief, but even then there was no time to waste. We gathered up our clothes once more and flew up the lane. We were taking no chances on the extent of the gamekeeper's thirst for vengeance. We scrambled over a stile and raced along the top of a railway embankment, and then, crouching at the foot of a hedge, we pulled on our clothes.

Five minutes later we had recovered sufficiently to begin to laugh at ourselves. Our laughter was a bit nervous at first, as if we were still half-afraid our enemy might leap out on us, but we were soon rolling quite helplessly on the grass. Still, when we quietened down, we were cautious enough to return to Fordyke by a roundabout route.

I WAS brought back sharply to the present when the gamekeeper left the bar-counter and strode over towards us. The recollection of that childhood escapade had been so vivid that I started up in my seat almost guiltily. However, the gamekeeper sat down beside my cousin and began talking to him. I learned that they were both members of the same miniature-rifle club.

A few minutes later there was a lull in the conversation. My curiosity about that incident in the past had been getting stronger and stronger. Before I could hesitate and let the opportunity slip I took the plunge and started off on the tale of what had happened on the Duke's estate that summer afternoon.

As I went on with my story the gamekeeper became steadily more interested. The canny expression on his weather-beaten face never changed, but his blue eyes fixed themselves solemnly on mine. Before I had finished he was smiling a little.

I took a deep breath. 'And now I'd like to know something, Mr Meldrum. Would it be you, by any chance, that came upon us that day?'

He stroked his chin. 'It might well have been,' he said, 'it might well have been.'

'I don't suppose you remember the incident at all?' I asked.

He paused before answering. I could imagine the bucket descending deep into the wells of his memory. 'Well, I've had laddies running away from me often enough, but stark-naked ones are out of the ordinary. Was there one of them that had to stop twice to pick up something he had dropped?'

I slapped the table-top. 'Dead right,' I said. 'It was me. Twice I dropped one of my sand-shoes. I nearly left it behind me the second time.'

We sat looking at one another and smiling. The memory of what had happened could still excite me, but I must say he looked placid enough. 'D'you know,' I said, 'that fright you gave us caused me nightmares for months afterwards. I'd wake up sweating in the middle of the night imagining you were at my heels.' He chuckled at that, but not very sympathetically, I thought. I leaned towards him and went on: 'There's just one other thing I'd like to know.'

'Aye?' he said.

'What did you do that day? How far did you chase us?'

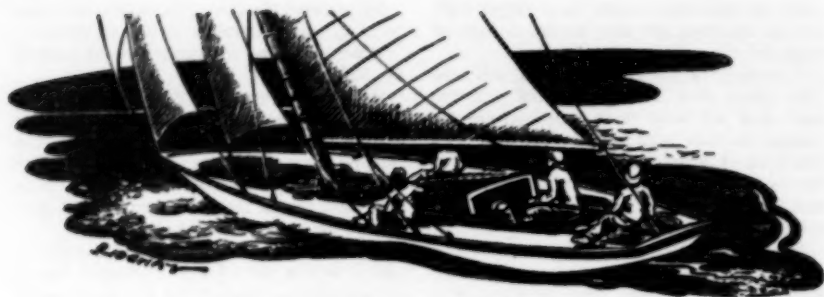
He took his pipe from his mouth and laid it carefully on the table. 'Well, what happened was this. I'd just come over the top of the hill. That other laddie must have seen me on the skyline.'

'How far would you be away?' I asked.

He grinned at me. 'A couple of hundred yards at least. I started to come down to the burnside, not running, you know, just walking quickly. I knew I'd never catch you, and anyway I'd given you a scare that would keep you away for a while. By the time I got to the water's edge you were well away across the field.'

I couldn't keep the disappointment out of my voice. 'And so you—you never really chased us at all? You never really did anything that day?'

'Oh, aye.' He was chortling at the recollection. 'I stood at the burnside and watched the three of you skelping across the field and over the wall like Tam o' Shanter with the warlocks after him. And then I put my head back and roared and laughed.' And, as if to illustrate his story, he put his head back and roared and laughed. And I'm sorry to say my cousin George did exactly the same.



## Return Passage

### *Nawiliwili Bay to Los Angeles in Twenty Days*

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STEPHEN ENKE

**A**FTER the biennial yacht-race to Honolulu is over, and the first celebrations have subsided, the problem of how to return the yachts to their stateside ports can no longer be postponed. To sail a yacht down to Honolulu from the mainland is one thing: to sail one back, against the north-east Trades, or up and around through the Pacific High, is quite another. And so those owners who elect to sail their yachts home, rather than ship them on the deck of some large steamer, anxiously solicit crew members before too many Corinthian sailors have bought an airplane ticket home.

The reluctance of many yachtsmen to sail back has various explanations. The return voyage is uncomfortable and tedious. The prevailing winds along the Great Circle course are fresh and dead ahead, and they make up a considerable sea during their sweep across the ocean; beating against these winds and seas means constant pitching and pounding, decks awash and drips below, and hundreds of miles of extra sailing on alternate tacks. If one goes north, and finally sails out of the Trades, one arrives in a region often referred to as the

Pacific High; in this quiet expanse of smooth water and light breezes a sailing vessel may take days to make a hundred miles.

There are inhibitions of the mind as well. No publicity and little outward glory attend the return passage. There is neither the mass start nor the gala reception so characteristic of the race itself. Instead, the yachts slip out to sea, separately and without farewells; weeks later, when they reach port, their arrival is unheralded. Moreover, on the outward voyage the racing fleet is in daily radio contact, and each ship can communicate with some other, so that there is a sense of community; returning home, the crew of each yacht knows and feels that it is alone on the vast ocean, out of the shipping-lanes, and far beyond call or help.

**T**HE owners of the yachts that completed the 1951 Los Angeles-Honolulu race solved the inevitable problem of return in different ways. Some of the boats were shipped back. Some were put up for sale and left in Honolulu. Of the majority that set sail

## RETURN PASSAGE

for the mainland, many turned back and on second thought elected one or other of the less glorious and more expensive alternatives already described. All in all, one half of the twenty-six yachts that reached Honolulu sailed home, and among these was *Skylark*.

*Skylark* is a modern ketch, 42 feet long on the water-line. She has moderate overhangs and no bowsprit. In addition to the main cabin, which has two berths, there is an after-cabin that also sleeps two. The galley is forward, and in a rough sea the motion there is considerable, so much so that the sink is apt to throw its watery contents at the cook on such occasions. On deck, the ship is well equipped with winches and the comfortable cockpit is fitted with a tiller rather than a wheel. The sail inventory includes a genoa, a balloon, two spinnakers, and a mizzen stay-sail, besides the usual working sails. Although *Skylark* can stand up to a good blow, and can perform capably to windward when driven, she gives an impression of daintiness. Nevertheless, she brought six of us back from Kauai Island to Los Angeles in twenty days, over a course of 2780 nautical miles, against the Trades and through the Pacific High.

We were a motley crew. One of us was a high-school boy, three were still in college, one had been a university professor, and the sixth man is a successful distributor of radiosets and -parts. The owner was unable to come along. No two of us had previously sailed together, and only one of us had ever sailed in *Skylark* before. However, we treated her well, and she us, so that we had a happy ship.

WE sailed from Nawiliwili Bay, in Kauai, the most north-westerly island of the Hawaiian group. Its position is about 22° N. and 159° W. The position of Los Angeles Harbour, our destination, is approximately 34° N. and 118° W. In other words, we had to make about 12° of northing and another 41° of easting. This may seem a strange way of describing our task, because the Great Circle distance between these two points is appreciably shorter. However, rather than beat against the Trades the entire distance home, we decided to proceed exactly as described above—that is, sail N. for about 700 miles, and then sail due W. for the rest of the passage. In all essential respects that is what we did.

The beat N. lasted a little over five days. Our daily runs were 130, 140, 169, 153, and 83 miles. We started with a reefed main, no jib, and decks awash. When we finally turned E. we were drifting at about 2 knots with all our lightest sails just filling.

Nawiliwili Bay is formed by a rocky point to one side and black volcanic cliffs, occasionally broken by valleys of tropical green, on the other. The point was cleared a little after noon on July 30th. We turned N., into a fresh trade-wind, and stood out to sea under reduced canvas. At dusk, with Kauai low on the horizon, we set the three watches, streamed the log, and made our final departure. We were not to see land or another ship for twenty days, although we did once hear an unseen airplane passing over us above the clouds.

The first few days brought fresh to strong Trades and a lumpy sea out of the ENE. We shipped water over the bow from almost every sea. As they inevitably do, the skylights leaked, so that it was wet below as well as on deck. We had no regular meals, for the simple reason that cooking was almost impossible in the forward galley, and no one had a good appetite. A few of our number were actually sick. The others limited their eating to sodden biscuits and tepid soup.

The night watches were characterised by a succession of violent squalls, some of which lasted for almost an hour. The lowering clouds could be seen in advance, coming downwind, and thus the watch could start the sheets and prepare to luff a little. During these squalls the ship would put her lee rail under, and smash N. at 7 knots. On such occasions, if one were in a lee berth, one lay on the side of the ship rather than in the bunk. The squalls were accompanied by torrents of rain, with the result that, although we were never really dry, we did feel clean of salt.

During the second night we set the jib and shook out the reef in the main, and had the first real meal; but the squalls on the third night made us wonder whether we should not have to reef again. However, during the fourth night the wind began to ease markedly, and during the midnight to 4 a.m. watch we substituted the genoa for the two working headsails.

The following two days were very light, with a Force 2 wind out of the NE. Everything wet below was hauled on deck for drying out. Most of us shaved and some took a dip over the side on the end of a line. Clearly, we were



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working out of the Trades and could soon turn to the eastward. This we did, five days out and 675 miles N. of Kauai, at about 34°. *Skyark*, by averaging 135 miles a day to windward, had reached the latitude of Los Angeles.

**A**LTHOUGH we had escaped the Trades, we were now held fast in the North Pacific High. The barometer read 1024 millibars. With almost 2000 miles between us and the mainland, our speed often dropped to 2 or 3 knots, and occasionally we would lie becalmed.

In summer the High is most often centred in about 40 N. and 145 W. However, the centre wanders around, sometimes moving rapidly and unexpectedly and the high-pressure area itself is many hundreds of miles across. Within a distance of about four millibars from the central pressure there are only very light breezes. For the next ten days we were to sail, drift, and power within this charmed circle.

During these ten days, each one very like its fellow, it seemed as though we were moving through a strange world in a slow trance. There was hardly any breeze, and what there was was altogether variable, coming first from one quarter and then from another. The sea itself moved only in response to forces hundreds of miles away. We now discovered where it is that storm seas finally die away in sleepy undulations. The surface of the ocean was itself a glassy blue, a reflection of the burning sky above. The only sight during the day was long rows of little white clouds, stretching towards the horizon, and making one think of a desert valley lying between mountain-ranges. At night, until the moon rose, the clear atmosphere revealed more stars than we had ever seen before.

Finally the dream was broken. Sixteen days and 1800 miles out, around 36° N. and 135° W., the breeze from the N. turned cooler and began to freshen. The speed started to rise as the barometer continued to fall. Once again two men went on a watch together at night—with the difference that, whereas we had worn bathing-trunks in the squalls off Kauai, we now wore oil-skins and pea-jackets.

**T**HE prevailing winds for almost a thousand miles off the northern California coast are

fresh, and come from the NW. We were now encountering these winds as we emerged from the High. During the afternoon of August 13th, we had a light breeze from the N. and the barometer stood at 1028 millibars. By the 14th, it had dropped to 1024, the wind had freshened to Force 4, and we were making 6 to 7 knots. That night the sea began to make up and the jumpy motion made cooking dinner difficult. On the 15th, we set the working headsails instead of the genoa and made 180 miles good. Twenty-four hours later, with the barometer at 1018 and a Force 5 wind on the beam, we had picked up to between 7 and 8 knots. Dawn on the 17th revealed a high sea, beneath a low ceiling of forbidding clouds, and once more there were few demands on the cook to furnish meals. However, a steadying barometer presaged a falling wind, and by nightfall, our speed having dropped to 6 knots, we set the mizzen staysail.

The winds that circle the High had brought us E. fast. In our best three consecutive days we had come more than 500 miles. Cloudy skies next day prevented us from taking sights, but our dead-reckoning put us 60 miles W. of Santa Rosa Island.

By now we were well within the Japanese Current, experiencing its chills and overcasts, and remembering with regret the warmth and blue of the ocean further W. These changes also brought a change in the sea-life that accompanied us. Coming across the ocean we had attached a growing number of gony birds. The prospect of further titbits notwithstanding, they now deserted us. The striped pilot-fish that had swum for so long beneath our bow, presumably under the impression that we were some large and strange species of shark, in their turn became disillusioned and disappeared. Instead of these we now saw an occasional seal and, at the very end, a few wandering seagulls.

The morning of the 19th found all sextants in use, and, as the sun slowly burned through the fog, we established ourselves S. of Santa Cruz Island and a hundred miles W. of Los Angeles. The rising sun drew a strong breeze out of the W. All lethargy cast aside, we set every sail that would fill. At 7 knots we were now drawing rapidly nearer the land. Finally, a few hours before dusk, two watchers sighted Santa Barbara Island, almost dead ahead. As the sun set, and the mainland lights began to appear, we knew the voyage was almost over.



Relatives were called on the radio-telephone and faces were shaved, the galley was scoured and personal gear assembled, the moulding food was thrown out and in imagination

whole meals of delicacies were anticipated. After twenty days we welcomed the shore for a while, but even then some of us wondered how and when we could escape the land again.

## Coal Creek

### *Placer Gold-Mining on the Yukon*

R. N. STEWART

AT the end of August I was making my way down the Yukon by easy stages to Fort Yukon. My future intentions were rather vague, as I did not know whether I was going up the Porcupine and over to the Mackenzie, or down the Yukon to St Michael's. Anyway, there was plenty of time, as I intended to wait at Fort Yukon until the freeze-up.

I stopped at Coal Creek because it is a very inviting spot in which to camp. At this season the weather is pleasant and the river runs benignly at its normal summer-level.

When the camp was pitched, the boat safely moored, and fuel collected, there was no more work that evening. I was contentedly smoking and watching the river flow by when I heard a hail, and a wizened little man came out of the wood to my camp. He introduced himself as Charley. He was tanned by the suns of many arctic seasons, had long, grey hair, and it was some time since he had shaved.

I was well stocked with provisions, so I invited him to supper. It appeared that he was shortly going to Circle City and would like me to take him there, but as he did not want to start for a week or ten days he invited me to come up to his claim. I was glad to accept.

Charley owned a log-cabin, so we struck the tent, repacked all my gear aboard, and made certain that the boat was securely moored. Then, loading on our backs such things as

might be useful, we started up the banks of Coal Creek.

NEARLY all the tributaries of the Yukon have a dense growth of jack-pine on their lower banks and the trail is difficult, though Charley and two other miners living up the creek had made some efforts to construct a path. I rather suspect that each miner had made his own path, just to assert his independence. We had some miles to go and it took us about five hours to reach the cabin. The ground rose all the way and, as we left the river's plain, the route became easier, the trees fewer, and the ground firmer.

Almost all the gold claims on the tributaries of the Yukon are some way inland from the river. The reason is that, due to the silt brought down by the river, the level of the plain has risen many feet above the bedrock on which the alluvial gold lies. Thus all the claims are in the foothills, where the creeks have washed away the soil and bedrock is easier to reach.

Charley's cabin was pleasantly situated in a green hollow surrounded by a few birch-trees. The cabin was big by Yukon standards and had an attic reached by a ladder. There were two rooms on the ground-floor and two big Yukon stoves. One window served both rooms. The beds were bunks built solidly to one wall. The furniture was strictly utilitarian,

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consisting of a table and three or four up-ended logs which served as stools. The bedding was a number of Indian-tanned caribou-skins, and each bunk had a wolf-robe. We went to bed on arrival, being tired after carrying the load from the river.

Charley woke at 6 a.m. and announced that after breakfast our first duty was to make some bread. He produced a large bathtub and, rolling up his sleeves to the shoulders, proceeded to knead and mix the dough. From time to time he scraped off the dough from his hands and arms and flung the result back into the tub. Looking up at me he said: 'It's grand stuff for cleaning the hands is bread.' I had visions of a somewhat grey-coloured loaf, as I remembered the state of his hands the night before and I knew that he had not washed since I had first met him. However, Charley was one of the best bakers I have known. He turned out delicious bread and it was whiter than any loaf I have seen made by professional bakers. It was sour-dough bread and no yeast or baking-powder was used in its make-up. After Charley was satisfied with his baking he proposed that we go to see his claim.

**T**HERE are three main ways of mining practised by the placer-miners on a claim. There is panning and rocking, hydraulicking, and sinking a hole to bedrock by empirical guess, hoping that, when the bed is reached, the gold will be there. All more scientific and complicated systems are beyond the means of the individual placer-miner or prospector and are only operated by large companies with expensive equipment. In Coal Creek each of the three simpler methods was in operation.

Charley worked his claim by panning and rocking. This method is only practical where the bedrock is near the surface and the loose gravel, sand, or soil can be lifted easily. This gravel or sand, known as 'dirt,' is either worked in a gold-pan or put in a rocker, a machine which is fed with water and rocked like a cradle, so that the water washes away the lighter stones and leaves a residue of heavier material from which the gold is picked. It is not a very efficient method, but, if the claim happens to be a rich one, it pays a fair dividend.

Charley's method was to spend ten to fifteen days digging up and piling what he hoped would be paying dirt, and, when he

had several tons gathered, he would spend the next week washing it. There is a great fascination in this method, because the operator does not know if he will find the next shovelful of gravel to be nearly all gold nuggets. Each period at the rocker is a new turn of the wheel of fortune and may give the pleasantest of surprises. As a rule, alluvial gold is fine in size and large nuggets are rare, but they do occur occasionally.

**H**YDRAULICKING is in principle the same method, though rather more thorough. It consists of digging the dirt all the summer until the last three or four weeks before the freeze-up. Then a wooden trough of U-section is built on a gradient of about 1 in 10. It is about 20 yards long, 10 inches wide, and 8 inches deep. Every two yards there is a step with a raised lip. Water is run down this trough from the creek and the dirt is fed into the trough from the top. The lighter materials are washed down, and the gold is caught at each lip and gathered at the end of the day. This method entails a season of hard work before any dividend is seen, and it may happen that there is no gold. But such a calamity would be the fault of the miner, either through inexperience or faulty judgment. The method is only employed on proved claims. If the miner has the patience to wait for the end of the season, the three to four weeks washing is a period of intense excitement, as it is then that his winnings for the year will be revealed.

**S**INKING a shaft to bedrock can be the most laborious of all the methods. Everything turns on the depth at which bedrock lies. It may be only a few feet below the surface, or it may not be struck until a hundred and eighty feet have been dug. In Alaska the ground is frozen and, even in a hot summer, only the surface thaws. A foot and a half below the surface the ground is too hard for a pick to make any impression on it.

The method used to sink the shaft is to thaw the ground as the work goes on. This is done by lighting a fire, allowing it to burn out, then digging out the soil thus thawed. Each fire thaws about nine to ten inches of soil. The only fuel is wood, which has to be gathered, manhandled to the site, and cut into suitable sizes. The nearest wood is taken

first, so each successive fire entails greater distances to gather fuel. Once the shaft is down six feet, the soil and wood have to be lifted and lowered by means of a derrick. It is no joke sinking a shaft with such equipment.

Some miners have boilers in which steam is generated and the steam is led by flexible pipes to hollow jumpers, like big hypodermic needles. These are driven into the ground and the steam turned on; this thaws the ground to the depth of the jumper and is a quicker method of sinking a shaft, but bringing the boiler to the site is no easy or cheap task.

Mine-shafts in an arctic country never require their sides shoring. The frost holds them in an iron grip and there is no fear of their caving in on the workers below-ground.

There is less excitement about shaft-sinking, because results are long delayed. It has happened, however, that such shafts have been sunk and, when bedrock is reached, the floor is paved with alluvial gold. One of the shafts on the lowest claim on Coal Creek was of this lucky kind and I saw a lot of gold coming up from it, one or two of the nuggets weighing as much as two ounces. Over thirty thousand dollars were lifted from this shaft in ten days, but it had taken two seasons to dig it.

Once the shaft is down to bedrock and the ground is payable, the bottom can be undercut to cover quite an extensive area. Still, work in a deep shaft is onerous, as the temperature is many degrees below freezing-point. Shaft-sinking is not a practical method for a lone miner; he has to have a partner.

Charley showed me the way to work the rocker, and we started to wash some dirt. There is a knack, however, in handling this tool, and I never became good at it, so I let Charley do the rocking and I shovelled the dirt. We collected a few grains of gold that morning—perhaps five dollars' worth, but in the afternoon we had one good moment, in which a few small nuggets were found. The day produced about thirty-five dollars' worth of gold.

Once separated, the gold is put into a poke, a rather elongated leather bag about 10 by 2 inches, with a leather thong to tie the mouth. Charley kept his gold in pokes underneath his bunk.

sunset snowshoe rabbits came out in hundreds. They were quite tame and sat within a few yards of us. If Charley fancied rabbit to eat, he shot one with a .22 rifle; the others took not a bit of notice. Charley was extremely careful never to shoot anything unless he required it for food.

Next day we saw some caribou on the hills near the cabin and, knowing that the other miners as well as ourselves wanted meat, we shot a stag and distributed its carcass. Very freshly killed caribou-meat is apt to be tough and is the better for a few days in the larder, but fresh willow-grouse, of which there were plenty, were delicious, and scarcely a day passed when we did not have one each for supper. They came to roost in the birch-trees and were easily shot.

My arrival had coincided with the season's washing on Number Two claim, where they were hydraulicking, and I spent the next day watching the process and lending a hand. It seemed to me that we collected a great deal of gold that day, and the owners expressed satisfaction, but no surprise or great elation.

It is very strange how a small quantity of gold looks like a fortune to the uninitiated. I suppose we are so unaccustomed to seeing gold in the raw state that our eyes lose their sense of proportion. To these old-time miners a handful of gold is just another commodity and they do not become excited about it, but to my inexperienced eye it always seemed that the quantity in the riffle was worth many times its actual value.

I helped Charley during the next fortnight and was introduced to much that was strange to me. Charley had been a gold-pro prospector for thirty years and he would never be anything else. His ambition was to find gold, not to spend it. Once he had found it, he squandered it quickly. Then he came back to find more. Only the finding appealed to him. He would never be happy away from this search and he would never be satisfied on any other quest. He was typical of all the old-time prospectors.

At the end of my stay in Coal Creek we went to Circle, where I left Charley. We had become close friends for a brief season, and then parted. I never saw him again. But I hope that, once before he dies, he will find it all gold from the grass-roots down and thus realise the long-sought dream of all the old prospectors.

**I**N the evening we fed the two husky dogs and sat smoking outside the cabin. After



## A Cigarette for Henry

C. A. MASKEW

ALL that week Mr Vine allowed himself the luxury of being late. He woke at seven as usual, even got up and was ready to leave at the same time, yet what a pleasure to know that he did not have to be at the office at nine.

To Emily and the children he kept up an attitude of hardly restrained hauteur. In the films he had often admired these kings of industry at home, the way they flaunted their personalities in front of their families. He allowed himself a cigarette before breakfast and began to comment on the stock exchange from the financial page of the morning paper.

Mrs Vine was at first worried with this change in Henry. He had taken to wandering around the house in the morning before breakfast without his coat, with a cigarette already alight. Then this awful stuff he read out of the papers, which she was sure he did not know anything about. She certainly did not, but she was so busy in the morning with the children to get off to school that she never listened very intently.

When he caught the usual train down to the City in the morning, Henry was inclined these days to be more aloof with his friends. He made enigmatical references to J. A. G., recounting little incidents of the day, in which he figured importantly with the essential

business of the firm. He had decided that it would be most suitable if he played a rather mysterious part, not giving away too many secrets. He saw himself as a strong silent type of executive making occasional wise-cracks and passing on pieces of information from the side of his mouth while he twirled his cigarette. It was a pity it was not a cigar, but he found that even now he could not smoke them. His stomach was not as formidably equipped for the new role as was his imagination.

His neighbours on the train and in the local pub were, like his wife, rather sorry for Henry. They supposed this erratic new behaviour was the result of overwork. Perhaps the poor chap would be all right after his holidays. No doubt he had been overdoing it, and it naturally made him a bit nervy.

WHEN Mr Coghill had died very suddenly, Henry had taken over control of the office as senior employee. As a matter of fact, he had been there considerably longer than Coghill, whose promotion some years before had been a shock. The poor fellow's sudden death had been in Henry's eyes rather a blessing in disguise, because now they were sure to recognise his own talents.

## A CIGARETTE FOR HENRY

Coghill might have had the personality and initiative, but the smooth and effective running of the office had been due in no small manner to himself. In twenty-seven years of service he had had hardly a day's illness. Of course, he had to postpone his holidays, but in an emergency like this he had, as he assured J. A. G., only the firm's interests at heart.

Mrs Vine was not so easily persuaded. She had long ago given up hope that the firm of Gregory, Ellingsworth, and Gregory, Importers, would ever recognise Henry. Such a soft one he was, with none of the push needed to get ahead these days, letting himself be bossed and pushed around by a young puppy like Coghill with half his experience.

But she was worried about the way he was going on lately. She had never known him to act so strangely. It was a pity his holidays had been postponed now when he seemed to need them particularly. She really could not understand the far-away expression he wore these days. At first she had diagnosed stomach trouble, though he had not complained of it, which was unusual for Henry. She had suggested indigestion tablets, which he had disdained.

He had been acting like this for almost a week now, ever since Coghill's death. Suddenly she realised what it must be. A few years before, Henry had had trouble with his hearing after a particularly heavy series of colds, and she could only suppose it was a recurrence of that. The most unusual thing was that he did not complain about it, and seemed irritated by her suggestions of medicine. This was certainly odd, because Henry was always such a trouble when he felt even the slightest bit ill.

Eventually he asked her to stop worrying about him. With all the extra cares in the office now that he was in charge, he did like some peace and quiet when he was home. He hinted that she would be more helpful if she stopped coddling him and kept the children quiet. A man with his responsibilities could not think when there was all that noise going on.

And so all that week after Coghill's death Mr Vine allowed himself the luxury of being late. He caught the same train to the City, but then came one of the best moments of his day. Everyone else jostled and scrambled to get to work on time, while he could stroll leisurely to the office. It was perhaps one of the biggest triumphs, this almost illegal steal-

ing of the minutes while all about him people were rushing. There were several large clocks to be passed on the way, and he could see their hands moving slowly to ten minutes past nine, twelve minutes past nine, while he paused to peer for a moment into a tobacco-merchant's window.

It was reassuring to walk into the office about a quarter-past nine and see everyone at work. He could hang his hat, umbrella, and raincoat on the peg, then stroll up between the desks to his own at the top near the windows. This was his second delight of the day, because he could stop here and there to check the work the staff—his staff—was doing, and receive one by one the good-mornings. Some of the clerks who had been there a long time still called him Henry, but he felt certain that in time he could arrange it so that as he came in the heavy swing-doors at nine-fifteen every morning each one would turn and say respectfully: 'Good-morning, Mr Vine.' He was not sure yet how he would address them. 'Morning, all' was rather schoolish, so perhaps just a plain 'Morning' would be sufficient and waste the least time.

HENRY was still musing over these little problems when he reached his desk. The phones stood primly, the in and out baskets were in their places, and he was in charge of it all. For a moment he glanced across the dozen desks where at each a clerk or a typist was busily at work. The comforting clacking of the typewriters and adding-machines, sometimes a cough or a chair scraped back made the long-lived-in atmosphere complete. He breathed in the air of activity and industry eagerly, almost begrudging the extra quarter of an hour he kept himself away from it. Happily he began to sort through the papers on his desk, blissful in the extra accumulation of work this morning. There was more than enough here to keep him working until six o'clock, and that without counting all the interruptions. The phone began to ring monotonously, and he answered it with a brisk: 'Vine speaking.'

Jerry, the office-boy, who was sorting the mail at the desk to his left knew immediately that the caller must be J. A. G., in fact the boss, by that sickly expression on old Vinegar's face. 'Yes, sir, oh yes, sir. Quite so, sir. . . .' Sickening it was just to listen how that awful little crawler went on.

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**B**Y the time a fortnight had gone by, Henry was so settled in his new life that he could not remember another. He was a little man, just over five feet, and unremarkable. People were introduced to him several times over without being aware of it, because there was nothing in his face the least memorable. Of all his traits, his anonymity was perhaps the most outstanding.

In his own mind, the new routine at the office was firmly settled. With one or two of the people who had been there several years he was still uneasy. Even in his new position they seemed no more inclined to accord him the respect he merited. But that would come in time. Although he treated them coldly, they persisted in their old attitude toward him, which was certainly not respectful. Over the years, he had immuned himself to office wit, of which his seriousness and lack of conviviality made him an easy butt.

His little mouth was set more firmly after one of Jones's witty attacks. His only defence was his absolute refusal to acknowledge or join in, much to the delight of the office. His senses had been sharpened after many years' contact with Jones's jokes, so that now, especially now, he could disregard them. Fortunately his little world made him unconscious, too, of the opinion in which his colleagues held him, even of his nickname of Vinegar, of the imitations and the little gestures which constantly, under Jones's tuition, threw the typists into giggling fits.

Of course, he was about the oldest employee and possibly the most efficient, but to the office staff and J. A. G. alike his almost inhuman adherence to work singled him out as an oddity. It was doubtful if any one of them could remember a time when he had behaved as one of them, but he was tolerated and made fun of as a matter of course.

**W**HEN on that Thursday afternoon J. A. G. summoned him to his office, Henry had no idea that it was the end. Even when he was introduced to Mr Mortimer, a large capable-looking fellow, he hardly understood.

'Well, er—Vine.' After all these years Mr Gregory still had difficulty in remembering the name. 'Yes, you will be glad to meet Mr Mortimer here. He's taking over Coghill's job. Sad about Coghill. Nice

fellow. Well, yes, Mr Mortimer will be in on Monday to take over. Relieve you of a bit of worry, eh? You haven't been looking too well lately. Well, you can take your holidays from next week. Mr Mortimer will be able to stay for an hour or so this afternoon and to-morrow afternoon and you can brief him on most things. Anyhow, when you're away, Jones there knows all about it if anything crops up next week. You'll be retiring soon, I suppose? Not for a year or two, eh?—Well, Mortimer, Vine will show you around. Anything you want to know, ask him. He'll fix you up, introduce you to the rest of the staff.' He walked out into the main office with them, piloting Mortimer in front of him. Henry trailed behind, a small, pathetic figure.

Luckily it was almost four o'clock, so he had only another couple of hours to spend in the office. It was the first time Henry could remember looking forward to six o'clock. This Mortimer seemed quite a nice chap, though very young. He could imagine Jones's remarks, and he dreaded the thought of the next morning.

**W**HEN Henry got home that evening Mrs Vine noticed at once how ill he looked. In place of the jauntiness she had come to expect, to-night he was very weary. During dinner he hardly spoke and immediately afterwards he said he would go to bed. He explained that he had been feeling ill for a while now, just as Emily had said, and they would have to get along at the office without him for a time. He would take his holidays next week—and then they would be in a mess. A fellow had to consider himself sometimes, and he must have a rest. In spite of all his hard work, there was mighty little appreciation or thanks a man got.

Just like old times again, reflected Mrs Vine as she took a hot drink up to Henry a while later. For a time she had been worried about him, but he seemed all right now. The holiday would do him good, but she doubted if it would make Mr Gregory or the office appreciate him more.

'Emily.' For an invalid his voice was remarkably strong. 'Emily, for heaven's sake where are you?'

Mrs Vine sighed as she hurried upstairs. 'Coming, Henry.'





## Rare Butterfly Visitors

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GEORGE E. HYDE, F.R.E.S.

THE butterfly population of Britain is small compared with that of many other countries, but it interests a considerable number of people. Many of these enthusiasts are butterfly-collectors who go to great lengths to secure unusual specimens. Others, though no less keen, are content to observe and not destroy the rarities they come across. Sixty-eight different kinds of butterflies are classed as British, but of these several are only visitors, with no permanent foothold here.

It will perhaps cause surprise to learn that even the Common White butterflies that give gardeners so many headaches are not entirely resident in this country. It is true that we have a goodly indigenous population of Large Whites and Small Whites, but this is supplemented every summer by aliens from Europe. The immigrants, as they are called, swell the ranks of the natives, and the feminine members lay eggs on cabbages and similar plants. There is no need to mention here the dire consequences of this.

Other more or less familiar alien butterflies are the attractive black-and-scarlet Red Admiral and the agile Painted Lady. Both of these reside in North Africa, and from there they invade many European countries including our own. They often breed here plentifully during the summer, but they die

with the coming of autumn. If it were not for immigration we should see no Red Admirals or Painted Ladies on this side of the Channel.

Amongst our other butterfly visitors one or two are well known by name, but they are not very often seen alive and free in Britain. Collectors look out for them every year, and detailed records of all such butterflies are made by the authorities attached to the Natural History Museum, South Kensington. Occasionally, because of favourable weather-conditions, a rarity may appear in large numbers, but these happenings are few, as books about butterflies explain.

ONE of the most exclusive of these fluttering aliens is the handsome Camberwell Beauty, and none is more eagerly sought. It is a big butterfly, with wings that span about three inches. Its main hue is chocolate-brown, which is relieved by a broad border of cream on all the wings. It flies swiftly when alarmed, but has a liking for the purple flowers of the buddleia and other nectar-bearing plants. Unlike the majority of our butterfly guests, it comes from more northerly latitudes, and it usually arrives on the east coast of England after flying across the North Sea. It breeds commonly in Finland, Norway,

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and other adjacent countries, but for some reason is unable to establish itself with us. This inability is not due to lack of suitable food for its caterpillars, for these feed on the leaves of the common willow. It has been suggested that our climate is too damp for the Camberwell Beauty's well-being, and this is probably true. It hibernates, and reappears in the spring, but the majority of those found in our own country are seen during late summer.

The Bath White, a species of more moderate size, sometimes reaches the south coast of England during early summer, and occasionally it breeds there in small numbers. In 1945 there was a much bigger invasion, however, and several hundreds of these butterflies were reported from various places between East Kent and Cornwall. Caterpillars were also found, and these were feeding on wild mignonette and other allied plants. One butterfly-hunter was fortunate in finding three of these caterpillars in Folkestone Warren, a famous haunt of migratory rarities. Still, in an average year only about half-a-dozen Bath Whites are reported in Britain, and not infrequently a summer passes when none is recorded.

My one and only personal encounter with this rarity was in 1950, when I enjoyed the thrill of seeing two Bath Whites in a small field near Canterbury. Although the butterfly can be mistaken for the Common White, its wings are generously marked with green on the under-surface, and this provides proof of its identity.

How the attractive name of Queen of Spain Fritillary originated is something of a mystery, although it was used as far back as 1775 by Moses Harris, a noted entomologist of the day. Like the Bath White, this butterfly visits Britain all too rarely, and most of us never see it. In common with the more familiar kinds of fritillary butterflies that inhabit this country, it has rich-brown wings spotted with black. These wings measure rather less than two inches across, and underneath the hind pair are several conspicuous silver or pearly spots. A friend of mine had the good fortune to catch a female Queen of Spain Fritillary in South Devon a few summers ago, and this obligingly laid a number of eggs. I was the grateful receiver of six of the eggs, and later in the year had the pleasure of rearing four fine butterflies. The blackish caterpillars were fed on leaves of the heart's-ease wild pansy, and the last butterfly emerged from the

chrysalis only a few days before Christmas. It was kept indoors as a protection against the cold conditions outside.

The Pale Clouded Yellow, a rarer and more active cousin of the Clouded Yellow, is not as scarce as the last three butterflies described, but it is still a prize. Just occasionally, as in the very hot summer of 1947, it reaches southern England in fairly large numbers, and late broods of butterflies result from the eggs that are laid here. It generally dies out during the winter, however, although sometimes a few caterpillars survive in sheltered places. They are green in colour and eat the leaves of clover and lucerne. The Pale Clouded Yellow has been described as the fastest of all our butterflies, and whether or not this is correct it certainly flies at an unusual speed. When resting on a flower it can be very docile, but if alarmed it makes off at a pace that leaves the average schoolboy well behind.

OUR population of blue butterflies is fairly ample, for no less than eight kinds are natives. The two additional species are visitors only, and they are the Long-tailed Blue and the Short-tailed Blue. The former has purplish-blue wings with black borders, and a slender black tail on each hind wing. The few Long-tailed Blues ever found here have been seen chiefly in Sussex, and these include one caught near Brighton not long ago. The man who made the capture had some knowledge of butterflies, but was ignorant at the time of his good fortune.

The Short-tailed Blue is even rarer than the Long-tailed Blue, and it is also less conspicuous. Resembling in some ways the Silver-studded Blue, it could be mistaken for that common butterfly. The tails on its hind wings are insignificant, and might easily be overlooked. It was first noticed in this country in 1885 at Bloxworth Heath, Dorset, and it is sometimes called the Bloxworth Blue. Only two examples were caught on that occasion, and the few seen or taken since have been found in various scattered parts of the southern counties.

The remaining one of our butterfly visitors is not only the largest, but also the most remarkable in other ways. It is usually called the Monarch, though also known as the Milkweed and as the Black-veined Brown. The last title refers to the heavy black lines that ornament the rich-brown wings, which have a

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span of four inches. The Monarch has its headquarters in the more southern states of North America and in Central America, and it wanders from that area into Canada and other more distant parts of the world.

Since 1876, when the Monarch was first noticed in Britain, nearly two hundred specimens have been seen or caught here. How they arrived remains a puzzle, in spite of the arduous efforts of entomologists to solve the problem. There is no disputing the flying ability of the Monarch, but whether it, or any other butterfly, could fly without help across the Atlantic Ocean seems doubtful. One suggestion is that these butterflies are carried for

at least part of the way in ships, for they have been noticed settling on ships in various American ports. Another strange thing is that the butterfly has only been reported in Britain during the last seventy-odd years. There were plenty of ardent butterfly enthusiasts long before 1876, and it is hardly likely that so large and conspicuous an insect would have been overlooked in our small island. The Monarch is not able to breed over here, for the food-plant of its caterpillars is a species of milkweed that does not grow in Britain. We can only hope that someone will eventually discover and reveal more of the secrets of this attractive wanderer.

## Britain's Historic Houses Save Themselves

FRANK MOSS

AT least half-a-million men and women will this summer wander through the rooms and grounds of several score of Britain's stately homes, and the sums varying from two to five shillings which they pay for the privilege will help to preserve the great houses as homes and save them from becoming the museums, hospitals, hotels, or nationalised industry headquarters which otherwise would be their probable destiny. Built in past centuries by wealthy families and filled through the years with lovely furniture and paintings, Britain's stately homes were doomed by the conditions of the 20th century. Taxation and death-duties have steadily depleted the family fortunes which maintained them. Shortage of labour and rising wages made it impossible to contemplate keeping them up as homes.

But for the determination of their owners and their energy and enterprise in adapting themselves to modern conditions, the majority of Britain's stately homes might have dis-

appeared in a generation, the furnishings and art treasures sold and the buildings falling into decay while the owners lived in a house on the estate. Searching for a way to meet the ever-rising costs, one or two owners after the War rather diffidently, and perhaps not very optimistically, thought they would try the revolutionary idea of offering to show members of the public over on certain days for a small charge. Ancestors may have turned in their graves at the thought of the people tramping through their jealously-guarded homes, but the idea caught on beyond all expectations.

Each year new homes have joined the list of those being opened to the public and the number of visitors has increased. Stately homes are, to-day, rapidly becoming a big business, not making a profit, perhaps, but bringing in enough money to postpone the need for closing the great houses and providing employment for men and women who might

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otherwise have had to be dismissed. This show business now seems firmly established and, as knowledge of the opening of the houses spreads and the transport facilities for reaching them increases, it is likely to grow.

**M**OST popular of the stately homes is Blenheim Palace, seat of the Duke of Marlborough in Oxfordshire, which has about 120,000 visitors a year, contributing perhaps £10,000 towards the cost of keeping up the home built for the victor of Blenheim. Mr Churchill's fame has, perhaps, been a magnet for overseas visitors to Blenheim Palace, but Vanbrugh's magnificent building and Capability Brown's wonderfully-laid-out garden alone are sufficient attraction for people, who visit them again and again.

Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, historic seat of the Salisbury family, is another popular stately home, with the advantage of being near London. Longleat in Wiltshire, home of the Marquis of Bath, attracts about 100,000 visitors a year on the days it is open. The many other homes which are opened include Luton Hoo, in Bedfordshire, home of Sir Harold Wernher, Bart.; Wilton House, near Salisbury, home of the Earl of Pembroke; Penshurst Place, Kent, home of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley; Clandon in Surrey, home of the Earl of Onslow; and Goodwood House, Sussex, home of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon. Opened for the first time this year has been Palace House, Beaulieu, Hampshire, home of Lord Montagu, which was originally the gate-house of the Cistercian monastery which has been open to the public for some years. Another newcomer to the list of open stately homes has been Kedleston in Derbyshire, formerly the home of Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy of India and Foreign Secretary.

What do these and several score other houses offer the visitor for his half-crown? The great attraction, undoubtedly, is the sight of rooms designed in ampler days, furnished for use and not as museums. The practice varies at different houses, but in many cases the rooms on view to the public are still used by their owners on days when the public is not admitted, and the sight of a newspaper on a chair or a letter left by mistake on a desk is a reminder that it is indeed a home that is being shown and not a mere show-place. The old masters hanging on the walls are not pictures

bought for fabulous sums at auctions, but pictures commissioned from the old masters when they were still contemporaries and hung as soon as the paint was dry, probably where they have remained for one or two centuries. For anyone interested in art there is special interest in seeing the family portraits, each by the most fashionable painter of the day, and comparing the styles; for the student of human beings there is a fascination in seeing the family likeness persist through generations.

The total value of the paintings in Britain's stately homes is millions of pounds, and as far as portraits are concerned they can collectively offer more, probably, than any gallery. And not all the pictures, of course, are ancestral portraits. The interests of the successive owners over the course of centuries is reflected in landscapes, battle pieces, marine pictures, animal pictures. At Knowsley Hall, near Liverpool, home of the Derby family, the visitor sees pictures of famous racehorses, including Sir Peter Teazle, Derby winner in 1787, and Hyperion, Derby winner a hundred and forty-six years later.

Each house has its items of special interest, not necessarily of great monetary or artistic value, but reflecting the taste or service of the family which has served its country through the centuries. The three hundred gold and silver trowels, spades, and keys preserved at Knowsley Hall show the astonishing popularity of the late Earl for laying foundation-stones, cutting first curves, and opening buildings and bridges. Here also is the 'tub of goldfishes' immortalised by Gray in his ode to Horace Walpole's cat, which was drowned in it.

Grinling Gibbons carvings and Brussels tapestries at Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire, seat of the Marquis of Northampton; arms and armour at Sutton Place, Surrey, home of the Duke of Sutherland—each home has its own special attractions. The most novel is a motor museum at Palace House, Beaulieu, a reminder that the present owner's father was a motoring pioneer. The old crocks include the car in which King Edward VII had one of his first drives.

**T**HE remarkable feature of this revolution in the stately homes is the way in which their owners have adapted themselves to changing times and turned business men. What they may think privately about throwing

## BRITAIN'S HISTORIC HOUSES SAVE THEMSELVES

open their homes to the public is their secret. They probably do not like it, but prefer it to selling up or handing over to the National Trust. Having made the decision, however, they have organised with great skill and no stand-offishness. In fact, some who started with trepidation seem to enjoy showing visitors round, selling guidebooks, or taking the money at the door. Several have expressed their pleasant surprise at the consideration visitors have shown in their treatment of house and grounds.

Arranging for visitors to be shown over a house at the rate of a thousand or more a day is not as simple as it may seem. Two techniques are in use. At Knowsley Hall and Blenheim Palace groups of visitors are passed from point to point, a guide at each place giving an account of the features of interest. At Hatfield House and some other homes guides take charge of groups and conduct them through on a set itinerary. There are differences of opinion as to which is the more efficient technique. So with the catering. A number of the largest houses contract out for teas and refreshments on a percentage basis. Others do their own catering. Many offer flowers, fruit, and vegetables from the gardens. There is probably little profit in it, but it helps to pay for the upkeep of the grounds and to employ the ten to twenty gardeners necessary to keep them in order. The sale of guidebooks and pictures is another important source of revenue, and in some cases the guidebooks have been written by the owners.

Should parking for cars be free or charged for? What is the economic price for entrance? Does it pay to have a 'Connoisseur's Day' at double the usual entrance-fee, when visitors are free to roam without guides and see the house at leisure without crowds? Such are the

problems owners have to consider, and about which they share their experiences. The Connoisseur's Day seems to have been the invention of Lord Onslow, and it has been taken up by others. One stately home found it did not pay, until the name was changed to 'Special Opening'; possibly people were frightened of that word 'connoisseur!' The fact that the change was made to see if it brought visitors is an indication of how seriously this business of showing homes is conducted.

The owners, having decided to open, have realised that it pays to advertise and they have shown themselves extremely enterprising. Transport undertakings have been canvassed to make sure they can tell intending visitors how to get to the houses. This year some two score owners formed a committee to deal with public relations and to make sure that Britain's stately homes are one of her tourist attractions, like the châteaux of France. One of the committee's first acts was to consult with the *Demeure Historique*, their opposite number, so to speak, in France, which has had some years of experience.

Through the centuries Britain's aristocratic families have shown extraordinary adaptability and a remarkable capacity to survive. Politics, wars, civil strife, economic blizzards have all taken their toll, but the family and its seat survived. A few years ago it seemed certain that the taxgatherer and rising prices between them would see the end of the stately homes as private buildings. But, as a wit put it, the owners have not been too proud to take public assistance, and they have exercised imagination and energy in giving the public value for money, so that homes which were expensive white-elephants are beginning to earn their keep.

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## Eerie Lanes

*Eerie lanes are peopled  
With a thousand ghosts,  
And the trees high-steeped  
Harbour demon hosts.*

*There are goblins working  
At the ditches' edge,  
Evil spirits lurking  
Underneath the hedge.*

*Love has left me surely  
When such ills have room.  
Breathed I freely, purely,  
Miracles would bloom—*

*Every lane be peopled  
With sweet fairy things,  
In the trees high-steeped  
Rustle angels' wings.*

MARY DARBY.



## A House Divided

ALAN C. JENKINS

KADREN has never worn the *shamshik* of the married woman; yet there is none more attractive than she in all Songelsk. With her nutbrown cheeks stained a wholesome tint by the brush of the arctic climate, with her long plaits, the colour of fern in autumn, coiled neatly under her spinster's *pervesk*, with her capable hands—small, shapely tools of nature—so deft to mend net or splice pine-root fibre for lassos, she would indeed have made a good wife. Moreover, Kadren would not have come empty-handed. She has reindeer of her own—the progeny of her dowry, a boat, three nets, a spinning-wheel, and a sewing-machine. Yet Kadren, who would have made a match for any man, has never married.

Once she was betrothed to Demian Sverlov, the richest man in the *sijd*, and, indeed, all had been arranged. Kadren's dowry had been agreed upon—two reindeer-oxen, four reindeer cows, and three yearlings—and even the day of the marriage: it had been decided that the wedding should take place as soon after *kassen-peiv*, Annunciation Day, as possible, when next the priest of the Orthodox Church visited the winter-village.

The *sijd* approved the match. Kadren was a capable, industrious, attractive girl, who would never neglect a man's hearth. She

would help with the seine-netting, help to muster the reindeer, tend the sheep, bear her husband children. Demian was a serious, upright young man, already a member of the *sobbar*, the *sijd* council, and he would inherit nearly four hundred reindeer on the death of his father, Blind Jogor, who was ailing already. Yes, it was a suitable match.

Demian had wooed Kadren earnestly, bringing her gifts of silk kerchiefs and a gold ring, and his cousin, Ontashk-Oll, the sheriff's adviser and a man of some standing, had spoken for him.

On behalf of Kadren, her *rist-jenn*, her god-mother, Ell Moshnikov, had spoken, and the old woman's face, a palimpsest of arctic history, wrinkled with professional disdain as she settled herself gleefully to an evening's entertainment. She had spoken for many prospective brides in her time and she relished the opportunity for a bit of hard bargaining, even though in the present case she knew the result was inevitable, for she secretly approved the match in advance. Convention, however, demanded some preliminary cut-and-thrust.

'He is a good man; it will be a great honour for any girl to marry him; the priest speaks highly of him,' declared Ontashk-Oll, sucking his pipe as he sat by the hearth of the hut where Kadren looked after her father, Jiise-



## A HOUSE DIVIDED

Osk Moshnikov, her mother having died two winters past.

'He is dull, he lacks that which would content a girl of Kadren's spirit,' retorted Ell.

'He will have four hundred reindeer,' countered Oll shrewdly, 'and there are few women would not find contentment in that.'

'There is Laddash,' Ell reminded him. 'He will have his share.'

'Laddash is the younger son,' said Oll, frowning, for he disapproved of Laddash, 'and he will receive a share fitting for a younger son.'

'There was a time,' Ell replied, 'when it was the custom among the Skolts for the youngest son to inherit all his father's property in return for staying at home and caring for his parents as long as they lived, and he provided also for his unmarried sisters.'

Oll cut the smoky air with a decisive hand. 'That is an ancient custom,' he said firmly, 'no longer practised. Besides, Laddash will never return to the *sijd*.'

Ell allowed the point, but observed: 'Jilse-Osk has no son. What will happen when Kadren is not here to help him with the seine-netting? Gladvi and Sina are too young yet. You must pay a generous *rutta* to compensate Moshnikov for the loss of his daughter's hands.'

Ontashk-Oll pondered the worth of a woman. 'We will pay four reindeer-oxen,' he announced.

'From a poor man that would be bountiful,' wheedled Ell. 'From a Sverlov it is unworthy.'

'In addition, we will allow Jilse-Osk one night's catch out of every ten,' Ontashk-Oll conceded. 'We Sverlovs have the best fishing-rights in all Songelsk,' he added complacently.

'You need have,' muttered Ell tartly. 'You Sverlovs breed like lemmings.' However, all things considered, it was a satisfactory *rutta*, and Ell had scored a notable point over the fishing. Jilse-Osk should be grateful for her astuteness. Altogether, she knew full well that the whole affair was eminently satisfactory and her resistance on Kadren's behalf was a formality that everyone appreciated.

When Jilse-Osk came in, Ell took the samovar from the hearth and the matter was agreed upon there and then. Kadren, sitting demurely at her spinning-wheel, heard her fate decided. Demian, squatting awkwardly behind his cousin, gave her suitable gifts, and

in due course, as was fitting, Kadren returned to her unsuccessful suitors the gifts they had brought her, shawls and rings and belts decorated with river pearls. She was the betrothed of Demian Sverlov, who would one day be the richest man in the *sijd*.

ELL was right about Demian. Ontashk-Oll was wrong about Laddash.

Though it is possible that she never consciously formulated the thought in her neat head, it was evident all along to Kadren that Demian had not that which would content a girl of her spirit, to use the business jargon of Aunt Ell. None could be more upstanding than he, none more respected, none more affluent. She would lack for no worldly goods, judged, at least, by those harsh arctic standards; yet there were things, albeit undefined, unknown, undreamed of, that even a Kadren, or perhaps especially a Kadren, wilding of the Lapland forest, could yearn for—things which a Demian, intent only on bettering himself, increasing his herd, exploiting his fishing-rights, could not provide her with. What Kadren waited for was as simple, yet as vital, as the rain that the parched earth waits for, the bee that the flower cannot be fulfilled without, the sun that is life itself.

Demian treated his betrothed with impeccable respect and honoured Jilse-Osk. When *lassen-peiv* was only two weeks distant he asked that the wedding might be postponed until the autumn: he was involved in a lawsuit which necessitated his going to Peattsäm. On behalf of Jilse-Osk, Ell agreed, but insisted that the *rutta* be paid in advance.

Ell was right; Oll was wrong.

At the end of his military service in the Frontier Guard, Laddash returned to the *sijd*. He could have found work again in the nickel mines of Peattsäm had he chosen, but he came back to Songelsk, perhaps like any young man to show his stay-at-home kinsmen a thing or two of what he had learned in the world outside their narrow sphere; more likely because his homeland drew him back as surely as the north wind draws the reindeer, as it does every Lapp.

As it happened, it was Kadren who met Laddash on his return. He had travelled as far as Ivalo in the mail-bus and had then trekked through the forest. On the shore of Rengashjaur, opposite the winter-village, he had seen Kadren rowing and had hailed her.

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While Kadren rowed, Laddash lolled in the stern of the little boat, a position he took up readily enough, for this merry-eyed young man of the world—had he not guarded the frontier against the Russ and worked in the bowels of the earth?—perceived that in his absence Kadren had grown pleasant to look upon and was unaware of her comeliness, and of course it is always gratifying to a man to discover a woman's beauty for her.

Kadren's russet plaits framed her weather-tanned face; a pool of light flickered upon her rounded throat; her deep-brown, almost startled eyes fluttered here and there like birds in a cage until, finding there was no escape, they came to rest and gravely returned Laddash's frank gaze; her slender arms were strong but unmuscular, and covered with a faint golden down; her bare, sinewy feet braced sturdily against the foot-rests. She enjoyed rowing for the sheer pleasure of knowing the strength of her young body.

'Then you are betrothed to my brother, I have heard?' said Laddash presently. 'You will possess many reindeer.'

Kadren blushed to her forehead.

The rowlocks creaked and scruppled, audible a mile away in that tranquil evening; even the oars plashed the still surface of the lake, from which the ice had only recently melted. Fluted trails of water unfurled languidly from the bows of the tarred boat and faded into silent ripples.

Wild duck rose reluctantly at the boat's approach. Slanting upwards, they emerged from the backcloth of pines and sped in swift silhouette across the pale sky in which there was no night. A crested grebe dived headlong and came up imperturbably astern, standing in the water to shrug its wings. Beautiful arctic tern skimmed anxiously. In the green reed-beds past which the boat glided teal whistled and plover wailed. Nearer, a curlew cried a sweet wild cry and, fluttering up and down in ecstasy above the swaying reeds, uttered his queer, liquid, bubbling song, the voice of solitude.

By the shore, tender, clean white and green of little birches lit the stately firs as if with quiet candles. Soon the leaves of the aspen would tremble; soon the bird-cherry would be tipped with white. Winter was a thing of the past, even though his breath still touched one's cheek; the brief, precious Lapland summer was stealing timidly back, like a fawn at the brink of the dark forest.

Laddash still gazed at Kadren, but his look was grave now and his face troubled. Kadren's breast rose and fell, and it was not only from the rowing.

There was dancing in the winter-village. It would be the last opportunity before the families dispersed to the summer-camps; many had gone already. Riggu-Huottar played his concertina and the young folk danced the *kruk*, the ring dance, round and round, a gay rippling garland of dancers. They danced the six-partnered *shestjorka*, the complicated eightsome *vosmjorka*. Riggu-Huottar's lilting music wheeled out, the couples crossed and wove, whirled and side-stepped—backwards, forwards, linked hands, linked arms, in and out, faster, faster, scuffle of feet, panting of breath, waul of concertina, a weaving, whirling, tripping, swaying pattern.

Demian stood among the elders of the *sobbar* and watched.

Laddash danced with Kadren and his arm was never far from her waist.

'Kadren is Demian's betrothed,' scolded Oijash, the mother of the Sverlov brothers. 'You pay her too much attention.'

'Let Demian dance with her, then,' shrugged Laddash, rolling a cigarette. 'He stands among the old men too much for a girl like Kadren. He will make her an old woman before he makes her a mother.'

'You will offend the Sverlovs,' hissed Ell the matchmaker. 'Remember, he is a rich man. Do not hazard your chances with that ne'er-do-well.'

Kadren, her face flushed, her eyes kindling, smiled into the leaping flames of the hearth.

**A**PART from the old people, and those who remained behind to take care of them, the winter-village was now deserted. The families had dispersed to their summer-camps, taking their household goods and nets and sometimes even a sheep or two for milk in sledges drawn along the lichen-paths by draught-reindeer. The reindeer herds were let loose in the forest for the summer.

Laddash had gone with Demian and others of the Sverlov clan as far as their fishing-territory at Ruokkjaur, where the *vueppi*, the small inlets, provided char, whitefish, perch, pike, in abundance, and the midnight fishing, when lake and forest lay under a golden hush, brought in a glittering harvest.

But Laddash soon tired of being a younger

son. The family was under the shrewish dominion of Oijash, for Blind Jogor was a useless wreck of a man, and Demian humbly did his mother's every bidding. Laddash took himself off deep into the forest, rigged himself a *kovas*, a little tent of cloth, and lived on hazel-grouse which he snared and the eggs which wildfowl conveniently laid for him in the hollow log nesting-boxes he erected.

He built himself a fish-trap, too, near the headwaters of the Sallajokk, and in July, when the char ran up to spawn, he caught many fish. The trap was simple but effective. First Laddash narrowed the stream by heaping stones on the banks. Then he built two primitive locks a yard or two apart. In the lower end of this dam he fitted a wooden frame with a funnel made of willow-sticks, at the exit of which were stretched two threads to prevent the retreat of fish that had entered the trap. Every morning and evening he visited the trap and retrieved his catch with the aid of a little net. There were few occasions when he was disappointed.

On his way to and from the fish-trap, Laddash used to pass an abandoned, uncompleted hut which his uncle, Teappan-Karp, had been building when he died. Skolt custom decrees that a hut left thus by a dead man must be destroyed, otherwise the builder would have to account for it in another world and be tortured by the incompleteness of his work.

Many times Oijash had reminded Demian of the necessity of pulling down Teappan-Karp's *pörrt*. The practical Laddash was not concerned about the possible discomfort of his uncle's soul. He saw that the hut was well-founded. The main room was complete even to the *takkj*, the open hearth. The hut lacked a door, and the roof needed more pine-bark to reinforce it. Apart from that, here was an excellent dwelling-place ready to hand. Karp had even built an outside baking-oven of stones.

Laddash moved in. This was a simple operation, for his worldly goods consisted of little more than his rifle, filched from the Frontier Guard, a few tools, a cooking-pot, and a bundle of reindeer-skins for bedding. The Lapp is not unduly bothered by questions of furniture.

Laddash divided the house into two parts, deciding that, though this would make it smaller, the uncompleted part would better serve as a roof-shelter for fishing-tackle. With

his axe, he fashioned a sleeping-bench and a table. With his rifle and fish-trap he kept the cooking-pot plenished. Later on he erected a *njöl*, a ladder on a tall pine-bole, out of reach of thieving pine-marten or wolverine.

Oijash heard of what her younger son had done and came hot-foot to Suvanto to remonstrate with him. 'Have you no respect for Teappan-Karp's peace?' she shrieked. 'Do you not know that his dead spirit will haunt this place and bring misfortune?' Secretly, she was piqued because Demian had not thought of living in the hut, for it would have been possible to live there all the year round without returning to the winter-village. Moreover, Oijash resented Laddash's independence.

'My mother, I have seen dead men in the nickel-mines and on the frontier,' Laddash answered her coolly, if somewhat rhetorically, 'and it seems to me that the dead are too sound asleep to trouble the quick.'

Oijash sent Demian to Suvanto with instructions that the hut must be destroyed. 'Brother,' said Laddash grinning unpleasantly, and ostentatiously cleaning his rifle, 'I intend to live here. Anyone who burns my hut will burn with a bullet.'

The Sverlovs were greatly offended by Laddash's attitude.

Laddash had a third visitor in his forest retreat. Kadren came that way, gathering the first blueberries in a birch-bark bowl. Her face was pleasant with the sun, her hands were stained a royal purple by the juice of many berries. 'Good-day in the forest,' Laddash greeted her, squatting in the smoke of a smudge against the mosquitoes. 'I am indeed favoured. Your betrothed came to me yesterday; and now, you.'

'You have a fine dwelling here,' said Kadren timidly.

'My people do not think so. They say it should be pulled down.'

'Why?' breathed Kadren, her brown eyes wide, for she was suddenly aware of her daring in venturing here.

'It was built by my uncle, Karp Sverlov.'

'Are you not afraid?'

'I am afraid of one thing only, Kadren. Laddash stood up and took her arm.

'That Teappan-Karp's spirit will trouble this place?' She moved away.

He laughed and gave her a long look. 'That you will marry four hundred rein and

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there will be no wife to tend the hearth of Suvanto.'

'I must go,' she said fearfully. 'Jilse-Osk will be waiting to start the seine-netting.'

With a little laugh he let her go. Then, before she had moved four paces on her way, he took the lasso from his shoulder, uncoiled it, and flung it deftly. The noose settled over her shoulders and, drawing it tight, he pinioned her arms and span her round. Her lips parted and her breath came urgently, but she did not cry out. Laddash drew her towards him, and, though she came slowly, she did not struggle to free herself. 'You are like a reindeer in a corral,' said Laddash smiling, 'the only reindeer I possess. . . . But my brother boasts four hundred.'

It was indeed a fine dwelling in the forest that Teappan-Karp had built.

**I**F the *sijd* shunned Laddash and Kadren, they were not distressed. 'They have left us alone for a long day,' joked Laddash. He referred to the Skolt custom of isolating a newly-married couple for the first day.

Kadren's open countenance wore a troubled look. 'Is this wicked?' she whispered, glancing fearfully into the forest. 'We have not been before the priest.'

'Can it be wicked to be happy?' Laddash asked, and drew her down. Her eyes cleared again. She was too much a creature of the forest not to be reassured by such an incontrovertible truth.

Meanwhile, goaded by the furious Oijash, Demian had gone to Jilse-Osk, taking Ontashk-Oll with him. Demian was secretly afraid of his young brother and would have done nothing direct in the affair, feeling that the less he said the better. 'Leave me alone,' he had flared at Oijash. 'Do you wish me to announce to the whole world that I have been cuckolded before I am wed?' But Oijash, angry beyond words at the idea of the Sverlovs being tricked out of four good reindeer and a tithe of their fishing, gave him no peace, and reluctantly Demian took himself off with his cousin to confront Jilse-Osk.

Jilse-Osk was building a boat. He, too, was angry with Kadren, but not merely for the same reason. She had been as good as a son at the seine-netting or the tarwood burning, and now he was alone with Gladvi and Sina, who were too young to be of much use,

while the garrulous Ell chattered like a nut-cracker and burned the fish-pie.

'This is a fine upbringing,' chided Ontashk-Oll, in his best style as sheriff's adviser. 'Your daughter has gone off like an evil woman. What will you do? Build your boat to sail in search of her?'

'It is he you should blame?' cried Ell, pointing a gnarled finger at Demian sulking in the background, while the weary Jilse-Osk straightened his back and wiped the sweat from his forehead. 'If he had been a man, he would have married Kadren at *lassen-peiv* when we wanted it. Then none of this had happened. The girl needed a husband; she was ripe for it. When you spoke for Demian, Oll, I said that he lacked that which would content a girl of Kadren's spirit.'

'You must return the *rutta*, Jilse-Osk,' said Oll. 'Four reindeer, and we no longer bind ourselves to allow you one night's catch in every ten.'

'That shall not be,' declared Ell shaking her head until her widow's cap, the *povednik*, tilted at a rakish angle. 'It is you who broke the contract. At the betrothal you agreed that the wedding should take place immediately after *lassen-peiv*.'

'I had to attend the *sheriffi's* court in Peattsäm,' Demian excused himself.

'You hid behind the skirts of that she-bear Oijash,' Ell reviled him.

'You must return the *rutta*, Jilse-Osk,' repeated Ontashk-Oll, ignoring the persistent old woman, 'or we take the matter to the *sobbar*.'

'Kadren is well rid of such a dwarf,' jeered Ell. 'If Demian were half a man he would thrash Laddash and take and beat Kadren.'

Nothing came of the interview except to increase the bad blood between the Sverlovs and the Moshnikovs. Laddash and Kadren continued to live undisturbed at Suvanto. They did not lack for company. The wild swans nested on the islands of the lake and now cruised proudly backward and forward with their whispering brood. The squirrels raced up and down the larches or chattered at Kadren when she baked at the oven under the trees. Sometimes an elk, stately and silent, with his majestic antlers and great ugly head, shadowed down to drink or waded out to feed on the succulent lily-pads.

August was the busiest month for the seine-netting and Laddash and Kadren had to work hard. Laddash had bought an old boat

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and a net from a Finn trapper, and he and Kadren dragged Suvanto every evening, for the char were coming up to spawn. They staked one end of the net onshore and, while Laddash rowed, Kadren sat in the stern of the boat paying out the rest of the weighted net. In a large circle Laddash rowed and the net spread its enveloping shrouds for the char. Then, when Laddash reached the shore again, he and Kadren dragged in the net and it was hard work for two pairs of hands. But the catches were meagre and the fish-racks Laddash had built were sparsely hung with fish drying for the winter. 'We must fish in Koshkjaur,' Laddash decided one evening. 'We will drag the boat overland.'

'Koshkjaur is in the Sverlov rights,' said Kadren uneasily.

'I am a Sverlov,' replied Laddash.

As Kadren had said, Koshkjaur was in the Sverlov fishing-territory, and the different members of the clan shared the various dragging-places. They drew lots for each particular dragging-place in turn. Whoever drew *leib*, a piece of bread, took the first night's fishing; *ill*, charcoal, represented the second night; and *kiedge*, stone, the third.

Laddash ignored this ancient custom, and he and Kadren swept a good catch from Koshkjaur that night. Ontashk-Oll and his brother Terenti Sverlov and their women-folk came upon them while they were gutting a silvery pile of fish. The Sverlovs rowed in and tried to seize Laddash's boat and gear, but Laddash knocked Oll down and stove in Terenti's boat, so that the women had to flounder ashore amidst many angry words directed at Kadren.

Laddash rowed Kadren away across the lake. He laughed softly and unpleasantly. Kadren trembled.

It was about this time that Eunka Moshnikov made his annual escape from the communal home at Peattsäm where he was confined. Eunka-Jilse, Jilse-Osk's father and Kadren's grandfather, had not been in full possession of his senses these several years, and, though his family had tolerated him with great kindness and forbearance, it had been necessary eventually to put him away. But it would have taken iron bars to confine Eunka, and regularly every summer he was seized by an irresistible longing to return home, to the forests and lakes and rivers he knew so

well. The Lapp exiled from his home pines like a wild bird in a cage.

Jilse-Osk was no longer embarrassed by these summer visitations. He still had a great respect for his father, and in his saner periods Eunka was quite capable of helping with the seine-netting, even though at the most critical moment he was apt to feel an urge to walk on the water. Yet, with Kadren gone, Jilse-Osk was glad even of his father's erratic help, for he had not done well lately.

'It is a poor season,' observed Eunka. 'When I trekked through the forest there were few fish running up the rivers. In a good summer I have known it that a boat could not move for fish and the bears would come down and gorge themselves until they stank.'

'Ay,' Osk agreed, 'it is a poor season. And there is wasting-sickness too among the reindeer.'

'There is never trouble without cause,' declared Eunka, raising a stern hand. 'Something has offended the gods.'

His son steadied the boat. He knew of old when to expect one of Eunka's spasms, which usually came at the most inconvenient time.

'Where is Kadren?' Eunka demanded presently, for nothing could be kept from him for long.

Osk was silently busy over his net.

'They told me she is betrothed to Sverlov,' went on Eunka. 'That is a good match. Sverlov is a rich and upstanding man. What *rutta* have they paid?'

'They demand its return,' Jilse-Osk said sullenly. 'Kadren will not marry Sverlov.'

'Why? It is your wish. Does she not obey you?'

'She has chosen Laddash.' Jilse-Osk was greatly embarrassed, for he was ashamed of his daughter's behaviour.

'Then they were wrong? It is Laddash to whom she is betrothed? He is the younger son, but he should still receive a goodly portion, for Jogor has many reindeer.'

'They are not betrothed,' shrieked Ell, who had heard all this from the shore. 'Kadren has gone to live with Laddash in Karp Sverlov's *pörrt* at Suvanto.'

Only the lap of water against the gunnels and the distant cry of a dotterel broke the silence that followed. For all his craziness, Eunka-Jilse was still head of the Moshnikov family, and one did not lightly break such news to him. For a long moment the old man stared from Osk to Ell and back again



## CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

out of his water-blue eyes. His bearded chin trembled. When he spoke it was almost in a scream. 'They are not betrothed? They have not stood before the priest?' he cried, the veins standing out on his forehead like blue worms.

Osk avoided those terrible eyes, alight with patriarchal ire.

'This is a great sin,' Eunka said in an awful voice, his eyes dilating. 'This is a twofold sin. It is this has offended the gods and made them visit the herd with wasting-sickness and emptied our rivers of fish. This is the cause.' The old man crossed himself frantically. 'Holy Trifon,' he mumbled, 'forgive our trespasses. We have sinned, hear our prayer. . . . His face contorted, he broke off suddenly and, springing up so that the boat rocked alarmingly, began to beat his son about the head. 'It is you have sinned!' he screeched, beside himself with rage. 'You have sat here and allowed your daughter to lead a sinful life and bring shame upon our family.'

With considerable difficulty Osk contrived to pull the boat back to shore.

'You must fetch Kadren home,' his father ordered. 'You cannot leave her longer in this sinful state. It is this that has brought bad fortune upon us. The gods are offended. Holy Christ will not listen to our prayers while this sin endures.' Eunka's religion was a felicitous mixture of heathenism and Christianity.

Jilse-Osk would have evaded the issue, but Eunka was so violent that at length, accompanied by the old man, he went off to Suvanto, albeit fearful of the reception he would get at the hands of the impetuous Laddash.

As it happened, Laddash had gone off to inspect his night-lines. Kadren was baking at the oven under the trees when her father and grandfather appeared. She went pale, but greeted them respectfully. Her breast rose painfully, for it distressed her to offend her father.

Eunka would have laid hands on her, but Osk restrained him and he contented himself with verbal abuse. 'You are an evil woman,' he screamed. 'You have brought shame upon our family. You have offended the ancient gods who rule over us, and there will be great calamity.'

'You must come home,' Osk told Kadren. 'This sin has endured too long. I have sinned, too, in letting it be so.'

'Laddash is my husband before God,' she answered simply. 'I am happy with him.'

'You have done wrong,' said Osk. 'You were betrothed to Demian. He would have brought you great honour.'

'I should not have been happy with him,' Kadren replied. 'Would that have been less of a sin to have married a man I did not love and be discontented all my life?'

'The choice is not yours,' mouthed Eunka, and his contorted face was not pleasant to see. 'You must obey your father, who has chosen for you.'

'I have made my choice,' said Kadren.

'You have brought shame upon the Moshnikovs,' Jilse-Osk said sternly.

'I am unhappy that I have caused you this trouble, my father; but I did not think that in being happy I could have done so great a wrong.'

'You must come home,' repeated Osk.

Kadren looked at him earnestly, but did not see him. 'I will not come home,' she murmured presently. 'I will go to Suvanto-saari where my mother is buried. I shall pray there and perhaps her spirit will counsel me.'

WHEN Laddash returned from his night-lines, he was filled with anxiety not to find Kadren at home as usual, for, though during the day she might go into the marshes to gather *lakka*, the yellow cloudberry, which she preserved in their own juice for the winter, she was invariably at home at the close of day to prepare the evening meal. Then he saw that there had been visitors to Suvanto. A boat had been dragged on to the sandy spit under the bird-cherries, and two men had landed.

Only one other family fished near Suvanto—the Moshnikovs, who had their *kess-palk* at the head of the lake. Kadren's father must have come to Suvanto and taken Kadren home. Laddash had heard that Eunka-Jilse had returned. Perhaps he was the second visitor. He knew well enough what the old man's attitude would be. He could not imagine that Jilse-Osk alone would have sufficient courage to abduct Kadren. In a black rage Laddash set off through the forest to the Moshnikov summer-camp.

Osk and Ell were mowing sedge for boot-hay at the shore of the lake when Laddash arrived, stumbling in his anger, which had not



## A HOUSE DIVIDED

abated at all during his hurried march. 'Where is Kadren?' he demanded hoarsely.

'Since when has my daughter been your charge?' retorted Jilse-Osk. 'Is she your wife or chattel?'

'Take your evil presence from this place!' Ell gave tongue, hot and irritable from the work.

'Where is Kadren?' repeated Laddash, and his teeth grated like a dog's on a bone.

'She is not here,' Osk told him, for he saw that Laddash in his present mood was capable of anything. 'She talked of visiting Suvanto-saari to pray at her mother's grave, and I pray, too, that she may receive good counsel there, for truly she is in need of it.'

Laddash eyed Osk keenly and saw that he was speaking the truth. Without another word he turned on his heel and made his way along the western shore of Suvanto.

From this side of the lake it was possible to wade over to Suvanto-saari. The island was a chaos of huge glacial boulders which in the past had been venerated by the Lapps as *seiede* stones dedicated to Baiwe, the sun-god, and his various colleagues. Sacrifices of reindeer and river gold and fish had been made here to evoke fishing-luck and trapping-luck. Now the island was dusky with birches and rowans. Wildfowl haunted it; wild swans nested here and guarded their brood against the depredations of fox and wolverine.

At the far side of the island lay the wooden tomb of Sollash, Kadren's mother, her feet under the Orthodox cross that stood at the eastern end of the grave. Sollash had died two years ago and Kadren had fetched consecrated soil in a birch-bark satchel all the way from the winter-village to sprinkle on the tomb.

Laddash waded across the narrow strip of water between mainland and island. 'Kadren!' he called urgently. A red-throated diver uttered its derisive laughter on the lake. 'Kadren!' and he hurried through a grove of dwarf willows. He heard movement in the trees and went that way calling Kadren's name. The bushes parted, and Eunka-Jilse peered forth.

Laddash halted in his tracks, too astonished to speak. Then he caught sight of the hunting-knife in Eunka's hand. The long blade was red with blood and Eunka's fingers were smeared also. 'Kadren!' With a moan of horror Laddash stood there swaying. His limbs felt as if paralysed; his brain throbbed

unbearably. Then the blood he saw on the knife came in a red mist before his staring eyes.

Eunka-Jilse saw what Laddash was doing even though Laddash himself had no knowledge of his own actions. The old man put up his hands to shield himself, but Laddash brought the butt of his rifle down on his head and, even when Eunka lay spreadeagled on the ground, dead at the first blow, his skull smashed like the egg-shell it resembled, Laddash went on striking and kicking him in a frenzy while all the time the name of Kadren moaned in his throat.

'Laddash! Laddash!'

Like river-fog cleared by a rising wind, the red mist vanished as suddenly as it had descended, and Laddash stared in bewilderment at his rifle and then at the broken, grotesque figure of Eunka-Jilse huddled among the lichen and the scrawny heather that was pale in contrast with his blood, his sightless eyes staring horribly, his skull crushed and revolting. Then he turned in the direction of the voice that was calling him and through the stunted trees he saw Kadren approaching him, white-faced and speechless at what she had seen. 'Kadren! He did not hurt you then? You are safe? What has he done to you? I thought he had killed you?' Laddash found his voice again in an incoherent babble.

She could not speak. Her breast rose and fell and she gazed in horror from Laddash to the awful figure of her grandfather and back again. She pointed towards the rocks. At the foot of one of the vast *seiede* stones, unseen by Laddash until now in his blind fury, although it was only a few yards away, lay a reindeer, still steaming with its own blood. Eunka-Jilse had made a sacrifice to wipe out sin.

The rifle slid from Laddash's grip. Laddash gazed at Kadren. He stretched out a hand to her, but she drew back. 'Do not touch me!' she whispered. 'There is blood between us.' She fell on her knees by the body of Eunka-Jilse and began to pray. Laddash stood dumbly watching her.

Night came down, for the white nights of summer had long since passed. Out on the lake the wild swans stretched their wings. Soon now they would be flying south again.

Kadren has never worn the *shamshik* of the married woman; yet there is none more attractive than she in all Songelsk.

# Twice-Told Tales

## XX.—Railway Grumbles

[From *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* of August 1852]

WHATEVER else may be the superiority of English railways over those of the continent, assuredly it is not apparent in the *carriages*. The public press has made an onslaught on the English railway carriages for twenty years, but with very little success. Let those whose bones ache with the ill-conditioned wooden seats of our second-class carriages, think wishfully of the cushioned seats, and the easily-opened windows shielded with sun-blinds, and the useful hat-hooks found in many of the French second-class carriages; let those who shiver under English arrangements, think of the hot-water tin cases beneath the feet of the first-class French passengers; and let those who wish to be usefully employed while travelling, think of the little table, and the pen and ink, provided in some of the Prussian carriages. The truth is, we spend money on magnificent stations which ought to be expended on carriages. The cramped-up position of passengers on English railways is much reprobated by foreigners. In America, and in many parts of the continent, it is customary to have carriages long, broad, and high, with an avenue down the middle, and short seats for two persons each on either side of the avenue; every person looks towards the engine, and there is a plentiful supply of window on both sides. In America, these short seats are not only cushioned, but each seat has its two elbows and its cushioned back.

Another English annoyance, is the *ticket-taking*. If all the wrath which is poured out on the heads of the railway directors during this formality could take effect, they would be among the most miserable and unfortunate of mortals. Arrived at Euston Station, we will say, by the last train from the north—some sleepy, some hungry, and all tired—the passengers are anxious to wend their several ways as quickly as possible; instead of this, the train is brought to a stand-still, the man

with his bull's-eye lantern pokes his head into one doorway after another, and all are kept waiting until all the tickets are collected. One passenger may have dropped his ticket, and then comes a search among the hat-boxes and carpet-bags beneath the seats; another may have underpaid his fare, or overridden the power of his ticket, and then occurs the fuss of paying up the difference; a third may be sleeping weariedly in the further corner of the carriage, and then comes the process of waking him, followed, perhaps, by a search for the ticket in an incalculable number of pockets. All this is nicely ill-managed! The larger size of many of the continental carriages, and the avenue through the centre, enable the ticket-taker to enter the carriage easily while the train is yet in motion, and to collect the tickets by the time of arrival at the station. On one of the Austrian railways, the carriages have an exterior gangway extending the whole length of the train, by which a guard can obtain easy access to all the passengers: shortly before arriving at a station, he enters the carriages, calls out the name of the station about to be approached, and takes the tickets of those who are to alight at that station.

There is one oddity about the railway management abroad. In England, a railway smoker commits a high crime and misdemeanour, for which he is frowned at by his neighbours, and threatened by the guard; but on the continent, not only do the passengers smoke abundantly, but we were once rather struck at seeing a ticket-taker enter the carriage with a meerschaum in his mouth; one passenger, whose pipe was out, asked the customary German question: 'Haben sie feuer?' and the official gave him a light accordingly. We believe, however, that there is a wish at headquarters to keep down this habit of smoking on the continental railways.

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## Science at Your Service

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### AN ADDRESSING-MACHINE

A MODERN method of duplication based upon special spirits instead of involving stencils and inks was described in these columns for February 1952. The same principle has now been applied for address-printing in office mailing, etc. The master cards or papers on which addresses are first typed can be kept in files indefinitely without deterioration and, as with the duplicating-machines previously described, each master will give 100 copies. The machine designed for using these is manually operated, but has an automatic feed; a skip or repeat mechanism provides complete visibility of the address to be printed, and can handle all expectable types of envelope. Yet, the machine is small, occupying a space of only 12 by 12 inches. The principle of duplication is, of course, the same as in this British firm's spirit duplicators—the film of solvent spirit on the roller transfers impression from the master copy to ordinary paper.

Other systems of addressing envelopes for regular mailing-lists depend upon metal-plate stencils. These are individually much more costly and take longer to prepare than the simple master cards for the spirit addressing-machine. For innumerable offices, whether commercial or the administrative centres of clubs, societies, etc., this new, simpler, and cheaper method should prove most useful. Several different models are obtainable and an electric model is in production.

### FOR CRACKS IN WALLS AND CEILINGS

A new plaster, based upon gypsum, is claimed to effect permanent repair to cracks in walls and ceilings. It is specifically manufactured for this purpose. Easily mixed and applied, there is slight expansion during setting which ensures a tight filling. The plaster dries fairly speedily, and distemper can be applied within a few hours and paint after twenty-four hours. The plaster is procurable in small cartons for home decorators or in sacks for builders and professional decorators.

### A NEEDLE-THREADER

Surely an automatic needle-threader has been on millions of 'inventions-badly-needed' lists for generations. Such an appliance is now available, and it is not expensive. Like so many domestic articles to-day, it is made of plastics and is even produced in different colours. The needle to be threaded is dropped eye first into a slot at one end of the appliance. A plunger at the other end is pressed and this automatically turns the eye of the needle into position for a fine hook to pass through it. The hook then reaches the thread which has previously been placed on a platform at the side of the threading appliance. When the plunger is released the hook returns through the eye of the needle, but bringing with it the thread. The needle, now threaded, may be lifted from the slot. Perhaps the best praise for this new appliance is that it has been recommended for use by blind persons by the National Institute for the Blind.

### A PLASTIC FLOAT

As so many householders know, the inevitable trouble with the ball-valve system of cistern control is the eventual breakdown of the ball or float itself. This trouble occurs most frequently in areas where the water, often through addition of chlorine for purification, corrodes metals. An interesting innovation is a float constructed of plastic material, stated to be non-absorbent, unaffected by water or acids, immune to electrolytic action, etc. At present the producing company is making a 4½-inch size only, for use with ½-inch ball-valves. The attaching stud is formed by a plain and slightly tapered hole, designed to take a specific and common screw-thread; the valve-lever screw will cut its own thread when screwed into this receiving-point. Apart from the fact that copper and solder are subject to corrosion, the alternative development of a float made from plastic materials will save the use of scarce metals. The price of this modern type of ball-float, incidentally, is pleasantly moderate.

## CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

### PLOUGHMAN'S COMFORT—A TRACTOR-SEAT DAMPER

Farming readers may be interested to know that it is now possible to reduce the jolting that is associated with tractor seats. A British engineering company has marketed a tractor-seat damper that effectively controls all upward movements of the seat by damping the recoil of the spring. The damper is telescopic, a stainless-steel plunger working in a split-fibre cone; the damping action is derived from frictional resistance, the amount of upward-movement reduction being obtained from the friction between the plunger and the fibre cone. This is adjustable by screw-control, greater friction, and thus greater damping of movement, being obtainable when required simply by turning a screw-knob during riding. Extra shock-absorption is also provided when there are sudden jolts, a cushion of air at once forming in the body of the damper. The downward movements of the seat are not in any way restricted, so that the normal seat-spring still absorbs bumps or jolts of this nature. The new appliance is moderately priced and can be fitted, without drilling, to the seat of the tractor model most widely used in this country and, indeed, in many other parts of the world. The base-plate fits the seat-studs, and the damper body, made of aluminium alloy, is readily clamped on to the back of the seat.

### ANIMAL-FEED SUPPLEMENTS

The fact that trace additions of antibiotic substances—for example, penicillin, aureomycin, etc.—to animal feeding-stuffs increase the rate of growth of pigs and poultry has been discussed in this feature previously. Although the use of these substances is widely developed in American farming—so much so that many turkeys last winter reached their ideal 'family' size too soon before Thanksgiving Day!—they are not yet permitted in Britain; here the results of a number of tests during 1952 are being awaited as the necessary materials will have to be imported, and it remains to be seen whether the likely increases in meat production would be worth the expenditure of foreign exchange incurred. Meanwhile, a surprising discovery of a like kind has taken place in the United States. It has been found that the addition of similar trace amounts of certain detergent chemicals achieves much the same growth-accelerating effects as the antibiotics. Briefly, detergent

chemicals are the non-soap chemicals that are used for home or laundry washing. Two quite separate sets of tests—one in Ohio and the other in Michigan—have demonstrated the stimulation of animal growth by detergents; again, pigs and poultry have been the animals that gain in weight through the additions.

Detergent chemicals achieve their washing results because they are what is known as surface-active substances—they alter the normal surface-tension of liquids and so make the detachment of soil particles much easier. It is believed that the same property enables them to increase the growth-rate of young animals. When present in the food, though only in traces, the food is more efficiently assimilated into the animals' bodies through surface action at the membrane walls of the intestines. It should be said that every detergent will not stimulate animal growth; many of these chemicals have other properties that would retard growth or injure health. The detergent substances used in the American experiments were specially selected because in all other respects they were unlikely to be injurious. Many more tests will be required before this discovery can be put into large-scale practice; there may, of course, be undesirable consequences that only long-term tests can reveal. If there are not, however, the new discovery will be of special interest to this country, for it is likely to be far easier to produce here the quantities of suitable detergent chemicals than to produce similar quantities of antibiotics for animal feeding.

### AN EMERGENCY HAND-LAMP

A newly-designed battery-fed lamp will give either a flashing red light or a steady white beam; or both types of illumination can be simultaneously operated. The flashing red light is claimed to be visible in the dark for a mile. The lamp, which is sturdily constructed, can be carried by hand or stood on the ground. The battery-holder and the two light-sources are attached centrally between the base-stand and the holder, and either the white beam or the flashing red bulb can be swivelled into the horizontal position. Motorists, yachtsmen, and farmers should find the dual properties of this lamp useful for a variety of purposes. It would seem to have a most important use when wheel-changing or other car repairs have to be carried out at night-time on unlit roads.

## SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE

### PUTTING ANTI-STATIC ELECTRICITY FILMS ON GLASS

The problem caused by the development of charges of static electricity on plastic surfaces was discussed in these pages recently. A similar problem has long been associated with glass surfaces, on which charges can accumulate because glass itself is non-conducting. This often leads to false readings on glass-windowed scientific instruments, the windows developing static electricity charges after cleaning. In research aimed at solving this small and specialised problem the National Physical Laboratory has developed a new process likely to find much wider application. Briefly, an exceedingly thin film of tin oxide is deposited upon the glass surface. Visibility is reduced by only an insignificant amount, for a film of tin oxide is itself transparent.

The deposition of the oxide film is first made by depositing the metal itself, tin. This is relatively easily carried out by methods already well known and used in industry. Then the glass is heated to just below its own softening point and the thin film of tin oxidises; when cool, the oxide film is washed in water and dried, this final procedure increasing its capacity to conduct electricity. The glass, now possessing a conductive surface, will not accumulate static electricity.

The wider use of this oxide-film glass is not, however, associated with its anti-static electricity property. Although the film conducts electricity, it has, of course, like any other conductor, a definite resistance; the film has a resistance of about 1000 ohms between the opposite edges on any square area. The passage of current through the film will therefore create heat, and a small amount of current will keep the glass surface sufficiently warm to prevent ice or snow adhesion in cold weather or mist formation in humid conditions. Oxide-film glass appears to have a definite future for car wind-screens and shop windows; the latter use must be regarded as particularly promising, for in a climate like that of Britain condensation of moisture on windows is often troublesome. It is unlikely that glass with an

external film of tin oxide would be used for shop windows or car windscreens; it is much more probable that double glass would be used, with the film on one glass surface sandwiched between the two bonded sheets of glass.

### THE SCIENCE OF MODERN FOOD

Many people consider that our modern diet has departed too far from the simple products of nature and the high proportion of our food that undergoes preserving, manufacturing, or fortifying processes is often deplored. It is not realised that these developments, and their steady expansion, are inevitable consequences of modern civilisation; by no other means could enough food for adequate nutrition be distributed throughout industrial communities. Only a few larders to-day can be close to the soil. A notable book on this theme has recently been published—Dr Magnus Pyke's *Townsmen's Food* (1952, London, Turnstile Press). During the late war and for some of the post-war years Dr Pyke was Principal Scientific Officer for the Ministry of Food, and this experience, together with his previous position as a food chemist, has given him a wide knowledge of modern food-handling and food-product manufacture. Considering the vast size of the food industry, it is surprising that no other book has previously tried to give a popular account of the industry's aims and methods. Dr Pyke deals with bread, meat, fish, milk, butter, margarine, cheese, fruit, vegetables, jam, etc., and his book is all the more important and readable because he attaches greater weight to explaining *why* than to giving long descriptions of *how*. Why is it necessary to add other substances to wheat-flour in making bread? Why must so much of our milk be pasteurised? Why (so regrettably) is processed cheese often available to-day when specific varieties of cheese are not? Dr Pyke's book will fascinate every reasonably intelligent layman and it will shower unrationed food for thought upon those who tend to be critical about the modern diet. In the dubiously-named field of popular science this is one of the best books of the past five years.

TO CORRESPONDENTS who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addresses will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, *Chambers's Journal*, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the *Journal* and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given in order to facilitate reference.



# The Gardener's Labour-Saving Aids

**DIRECTLY** I say in mixed company that I am a gardener someone is sure to remark: 'I wish you'd invent something that would take the backache out of gardening!' Such remarks are passed as if there were no devices to-day to help us in our horticultural activities. There are, of course, many, and I want to use what space I have this month to mention a number of them worth buying.

There are, for instance, two types of mechanical hedge-cutters. There is one which is rotary and costs in the region of £7, and there is another which is larger and works on the principle of the garden-shears. The rotary cutter weighs only 3 lb. and is guaranteed electrically for twelve months. There are spare cutters available, together with a clutch mechanism, so that if an obstruction is encountered which might damage the cutting edges the machine ceases to revolve. The larger cutter does the work of six men and is very popular in the bigger garden. In both cases the electricity is obtained either from the house mains or from a portable generator.

From the hedge we come to the lawn, and there are, of course, a number of motor-mowers which are very popular indeed, and rightly so. Some of these mowers cut in the normal way, and others have a rotary blade. The former are usually preferred because they leave the grass in those lovely long strips which are a feature of the British sward. You can have an electrical mower which can be plugged in to the mains and used on the lawn with a long lead. I have used one which weighs only 15 lb. and which minces up the lawn grass so fine that there is no

reason to use a box at all. The tiny pieces of grass are deposited on the sward and thus organic matter goes back to the ground.

Many of my friends cultivate their garden by means of small power-driven machines, some of which do the hoeing and cultivating necessary, and others of which have rotary tines which in a few moments pulverise the soil and produce a fine tilth. These are, incidentally, the bantam or baby types of the bigger machines used by market-gardeners. For those who cannot afford power-driven machines there are the twin-wheeled hoes, which cost less than £5, or the single-wheel hoes, which sell at round about £3. They take the backache out of hoeing.

The seeds, of course, can be sown mechanically, and there are various types of apparatus offered for the purpose. When the machines are used properly, there is certainly no seed wastage, and much of the transplanting can be saved. The opening of the furrow, the dropping in of the seed, the covering and firming are all, needless to say, done in one operation. Potting up can be saved by using the hand soil-block makers. These produce, as it were, plant pots made out of the gardener's own soil, composted with some peat and sand, and plants do far better in these than in clay pots. They are invaluable for tomatoes, cucumbers, marrow, zinnias, fuchsias, geraniums, etc., in the early stages.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.

## Orders for the Month

**Flowers.**—Disbud the border chrysanthemums. Remove rose suckers. Plant out the pansies for edging, and the Brompton stocks in a sheltered place. Propagate hydrangeas, heliotropes, petunias, and verbenas; and the violas and fuchsias by cuttings. Feed the sweet-peas and roses well.

**Fruit.**—Cut out the fruited raspberry-canes. Remove shading leaves around peaches. Hoe through the strawberry rows after picking; remove the straw and compost. Continue Lorette summer pruning apples and pears. Protect ripening figs with muslin bags.

**Vegetables.**—Feed the onions with fish-manure. Harvest the outdoor tomatoes early. Keep picking the runner-beans and water the rows well. Make another sowing of spring cabbage in a seed-bed, and sow the red pickling cabbage and a little parsley in a sheltered place for the winter.

**Greenhouse.**—Sow cyclamen in John Innes compost. Propagate cacti; also zonal pelargoniums by cuttings. Feed chrysanthemums with liquidure. Spray cinerarias with nicotine against leaf-miner. Pot up herbaceous calceolarias. Give more air and light to hydrangea cuttings as they become rooted.

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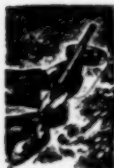
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All Lifeboats are equipped with this life-saving device, which can project a line 150 yards.

Help to provide this safeguard by sending a contribution, however small. Your contribution may save a life.



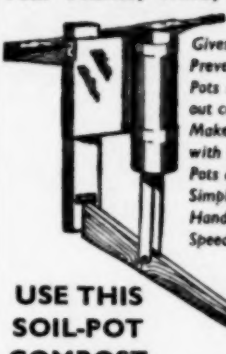
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42 GROSVENOR GARDENS,  
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**The Chase Soil-Pot Maker Saves  
Your Plants, Time, Labour, Expense**



### Advantages:—

Gives adequate root aeration.  
Prevents risk of root damage.  
Pots shaped round plants without compressing stems.  
Makes 40 pots in 15 minutes with the seedlings safe in each.  
Pots are made as required.  
Simplicity itself to operate.  
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COMPOST**

**CARRIAGE PAID  
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Chase Soil-Pot Compost is highly recommended for use with this Machine. 2-Bushel Bag, 19/6. Carr. paid.

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Full Diesel engines—four-stroke, compression-ignition, solid injection, in a range of eight models from 22 to 132 H.P.

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Per 1/- PACKET

(NET WEIGHT 8 oz.)

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*Crisp and Creamy—Unsweetened*

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